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THE SPHERE, APRIL 10, 1943
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THE SPHERE

Vol. CLXXIII No. 2255 WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED THE GRAPHIC APRIL 10 1943

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Volume CLXXIII No. 2255 The SPHERE, London, April 10, 1943

THE SPHERE
With which is incorporated "THE GRAPHIC"
The Empire's Illustrated Weekly

BRITISH TROOPS IN OCCUPATION OF THE FAMOUS MARETH LINE, IN SOUTHERN TUNISIA, AFTER ITS CAPTURE BY THE EIGHTH ARMY. This is an Observation Post in one of the captured forts in the Line: note the strong "pill-box" in the background

As in the case of the even more famous Maginot Line, the Tunisian Mareth Line fell as the result of a flanking movement which rendered the strong fortifications useless for defence purposes, as Rommel's flank and rear were placed in such grave danger. General Montgomery's great tactical move was the despatch of a strong force round the southern end of the Line to El Hamma: faced with this threat, the enemy felt compelled to abandon the whole line of fortifications which had been built some years earlier by the French as a defence against possible Italian encroachments from Tripolitania. But the Mareth Line *was* a very definite Line, whose defences were indeed formidable—as the above picture indicates! After its occupation, our troops found "pill-boxes," trench systems, chains of fortifications, anti-tank ditches and other considerable obstacles. (*See also pages* 40-41 *and pages* 46-47 *of this issue*)

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A WAR NEWSLETTER—No. 188

1, NEW OXFORD STREET, W.C.1.

Mareth and So On.—

Perhaps Montgomery will be known to history as "El Hamma of the Hun." There are precedents for England and Scotland in Edward I and William Wallace. Anyway, he announced a big success eight days after he began to move from east and south of the Mareth Line. It was ding-dong, biff and rebuff, hard pounding. And the British Eighth Army did most of the pounding and stood the pounding best and longest. All who took part, British, Americans, French, Africans and the rest, are veterans now. Time will elapse before we know the chief keys to this great triumph, whether the frontal assault or the left hook is to have pride of place. But *this* we know already: that the air co-operation was of record-breaking intensity and efficiency, and that, without it, no amount of valour and wise strategy on land could have availed. Is it not true to-day—a maxim of military text-books—that a well-prepared and entrenched defence zone in depth held by modern armies, with modern weapons against armour, and having a strong mobile reserve of armour and interior lines, is impregnable, unless the attackers can bring to bear air intervention on an appropriate scale and with air superiority? This seems to be to-day as much a commonplace of military strategy as in naval strategy is the principle that warships operating within range of the enemy's shore-based air power are too vulnerable to justify such operations. How swiftly does the science of war evolve, how very soon is an antidote found for the latest poison! A final reflection on this great campaign which began near Alexandria. What a debt we owe to those young armies of ours, and of our allies, to the Navy, above all to the Air Forces—a debt which we pay wholeheartedly when the goods are delivered, but, I sometimes think, half-heartedly in the periods of lull and preparation.

Berlin.—

The light comes back, but in Berlin the black-out is greater than it was, and there is an atmosphere of sulphurous ruin about the capital. We are given to believe that the inhabitants are conscious of it and even contribute to the tone of general ruination. Berlin has many targets of military importance—not perhaps so many as the Ruhr cities or the ports. Bombing these targets in Berlin does not permit of quite the same measure of *precision*. . . . But we know that Stalin attaches special importance to attacks on Berlin and greatly enjoys hearing about the results, and we know that the American "best-seller" journalists in the early years of the war believed that Berlin's morale melted away quicker under bombing than did that of a provincial city, which may or may not be true to-day. So Berlin has been getting it, and just now the black-out there is quite satisfactory. But, though the darkness hangs over Berlin, the little Doctor of Lies still guides the way to the Truth with his torch and Ribbentrop is still proving by spurious chapter and forged verse that Britain started this war. When Germany wanted Poland and Czechoslovakia, it was Britain who encouraged these animals to be *méchants*—to defend themselves when attacked. He does not make the shrewder point that Britain was far too weak to come to their aid, if and when they did defend themselves. He makes the ingenuous point that Britain was an encourager of smaller nations which thought fit to resist being gobbled up on Germany's expansion and domination menu. But, although the black-out is undoubtedly thick and sombre in Berlin to-day, I fancy it is not so universally dense as Goebbels and Ribbentrop believe. I doubt whether Goebbels's torch or Ribbentrop's champagne to-day lead the Berliners so readily to the truth (as G. and R. see it). The total evil of war is ever-present in my mind, and I still catalogue bombing from the air, except in direct co-operation with land or sea action, as an expedient of war as justly to be outlawed by civilised nations as the use of gas. The fact that we now practise it with superior skill (and officially revel in the catalogue of our destructive successes) is the surest proof of the only good thing that comes out of war—the truth that *he who takes up the sword shall perish by the sword.*

GENERAL ANDERSON, G.O.C. OF THE BRITISH FIRST ARMY IN NORTHERN TUNISIA, with his American aide-de-camp. Recently, General Anderson visited a forward position of a well-known County Regiment, in company with a British Brigadier. They are here seen looking out over enemy territory while conferring on the choice of positions. The General is on the left and the Brigadier in the centre: on the right is General Anderson's aide, Major Clarke of the U.S. Army

Florence —

Our hope is that civilisation will one day hold that recourse to war is the negation of civilisation and beyond the pale of contemplation by any nation which claims any degree of culture. We are fighting to-day for that object. Hitherto civilisation (of a sort) has marched hand-in-hand with war, but until the world wars of our time grew intense, always the belligerents have more or less adhered to a few cardinal conventions limiting its destructive imbecilities. One such restriction governed the destruction of irreplaceable monuments of Art. Even to save its life, a belligerent would keep its hand off the Parthenon, Rome, Florence and unique cathedrals and buildings of rare merit. The Germans of 1914–18 broke that rule with Louvain, Rheims, and so on, but they spared Amiens, perhaps because they knew their number was up. The Germans of 1939 have further reduced the irreducible minimum. They have spared the Parthenon and Cairo in an otherwise go-as-you-please holocaust. It might well have "paid" us in a military and temporary sense to bomb Rome to blazes; but we have kept our hands off Rome. Italy is the most rich (and fortunate) of all belligerents in the possession of museum cities, and Florence, for its size, is perhaps the richest mine of artistic treasure in the world. I can understand the feelings of Florentines if to-day they are watching their city fiillng up with the wealthier refugees from bombing, and with ugly modern factories rising under the cover and protection of the Duomo or Santa Maria. This question of using the shelter of cultural treasures as a protection for war output is topical and apt as a subject for debate in schools (or the House of Lords). Such men as Gayda have long instigated hate and aggression from the haven of the Seven Hills, and the turning-out of aero engines under Giotto's tower would be but an extension of a principle long since accepted and practised by the Fascists. Mussolini will be wise to take note and take action on the Florentine rumour.

The Fate of Hitler.—

What is the fate and destiny of Hitler? It is a peep into the future which most of us would wish and dare to take, if we could. If I were compelled to make a prophecy I should elect for *suicide and immortality*. I do not think he will be assassinated by any German. I do not think he will allow himself to fall into Allied hands to stand trial for his crimes. We know that his self-pride and egotism are transcendent, and we have no reason to suppose he lacks courage in desperation. His hint about "pistols and poison," applied to Paulus, may be a pointer to his own ideas of failure. As for immortality, if history has any lessons to teach, as I believe it has, I should confidently expect that in Germany at least Hitler will go down to history as the greatest German of all time. Is not Napoleon the greatest Frenchman? To-day we must reckon that a majority of the Germans regard Hitler as semi-divine—nay, greater and better than Christ—and his *Mein Kampf* a nobler book than the Bible. Any insults we may hurl at Hitler can only fall as blasphemy and ineptitude on a majority of German ears and stiffen resistance. The weakest link in the policy of trial of war criminals is not the difficulty of the numbers of the guilty, of the composition of the Court, of the procuration of the evidence; it is the danger of making a saint and a martyr of a ruffian. Myself, I believe he will save us from that risk by making a saint and martyr of himself at the end—if his health remains to him to the end. And, either way, if he end his life by suicide or hanging according to law, his immortality and glory in German eyes seem to me assured. For the parallel with Napoleon cannot be rejected. All of which, you may object, are poor arguments for urging a revision of our propaganda policy towards a sustained, restrained and reasoned appeal to the German people to end, sooner than later, their inevitable doom and present distress by overthrowing their God and submitting to just punishment, retribution and restoration, and all measures necessary to prevent future aggression and revenge. But are they such poor arguments? After Waterloo the French would certainly have handed over Napoleon, if he had not saved them the trouble. Yet Napoleon remains the greatest Frenchman in the Pantheon of national heroes. And what stronger arguments can you produce for a constructive, restrained and reasoned propaganda to Germany? It may well be that, after a sustained hammering from reasoned propaganda and explosives concurrently administered, the Germans may see the point of putting Hitler tenderly in cold storage, if thereby they might save something from the wreck. To continue to belittle him and ridicule him in German ears is, I am convinced, about as useful as dumping our output of filled shells into the Channel.

Saving Rubber. —

I think most of us do appreciate the need of saving rubber. I think, too, that most owners of private cars on the road realise what irreplaceable assets cars are, and have no desire to wear them out on the roads needlessly. The small ration of petrol allotted to them is fully mortgaged to essential jobs. It may be argued that people who live in remote areas, far from bus routes and railways, ought not to use petrol for education, for fortnightly catering, for magisterial duties, for business not directly related to war production or prosecution. That may be; that may yet come. Meanwhile, we use the petrol and the car we have with infinite restraint and by authority. But when the pundits tell us that we waste rubber by running our tyres bare instead of "sending them punctually for retreading," I wonder if they realise *quite* how difficult and lengthy they have made the process of reconditioning tyres by the meticulous safeguards imposed. You send in your peripatetic "road-book" to the fuel controller and get back some day a form which does not cover quite what you asked for. Further elucidation may be necessary. Then you discover that the nearest "tyre depot" is 18 miles away. The tyre cannot be accepted for reconditioning without the certificate and without the *car* to which it is fixed. Two precious gallons of petrol must be used to get the tyre "accepted" for reconditioning in a town which, perhaps, you never visit on your "lawful occasions." More petrol will be needed to bring the reconditioned tyre home at last, and then still more to have it refitted to its wheel at some nearer, local garage which possibly *may* undertake the work, and probably will refuse it from overwork. Small wonder if tyres are run bare to the canvas! The alternative is made too difficult, and infinitely slow and wasteful.

Preston and Patriotism.—

After reading Captain Randolph Churchill's "reply" to Captain Cobb published in the Press on All Fools' Day, I came to some sombre conclusions. Captain Churchill's father, when roused by fine and just resentment, has often shown himself a master of invective, of scorn and of indignation. At no period in his career (which has not lacked its full share of combat), has he shown himself little. He has always been the lion, never the cat. I am sure Captain Churchill, with experience and practice, will develop some of the Premier's great qualities. Meanwhile, I believe the most patriotic course he could pursue for the rest of this war would be a resolve to publish no more letters or articles in the Press. He carries the weight and bears the responsibilities and enjoys the privileges of a great name; and no Englishman reading that Preston letter, and honouring his father and realising the weight of his present burden, but must devoutly desire that he should not again be called on to "father that also." And, generally, these are great days in history, when banners and not dirty linen should be hung on the line.

THE OLD STAGER

THE R.A.F. TAKES OVER GUARD DUTIES AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE ON ITS TWENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY. The Royal Party in the Palace forecourt during the ceremony of the Changing of the Guard. Behind the King and Queen are Air Chief-Marshal Sir Charles Portal, with Sir Archibald Sinclair, Minister for Air. The guard was provided by men of the recently-created R.A.F. Regiment

THE R.A.F.'s 25th ANNIVERSARY

The King's Message to the Royal Air Force.

To the Right Hon. Lord Weir, Secretary of State and President of the Air Council.

IN this supreme hour of victory I send greetings and heartfelt congratulations to all ranks of the Royal Air Force. Our aircraft have been ever in the forefront of the battle; pilots and observers have consistently maintained the offensive throughout the ever-changing fortunes of the day, and in the war zones our gallant dead have lain always beyond the enemies' lines or far out to sea.

OUR far-flung squadrons have flown over home waters and foreign seas, the Western and Italian battle lines, Rhineland, the mountains of Macedonia, Gallipoli, Palestine, the plains of Mesopotamia, the forests and swamps of East Africa, the North-West frontier of India, and the deserts of Arabia, Sinai, and Darfur.

THE birth of the Royal Air Force, with its wonderful expansion and development, will ever remain one of the most remarkable achievements of the Great War.

EVERYWHERE, by God's help, officers, men and women of the Royal Air Force have splendidly maintained our just cause, and the value of their assistance to the Navy, the Army, and to Home Defence has been incalculable. For all their magnificent work, self-sacrifice, and devotion to duty, I ask you on behalf of the Empire to thank them.

November 11th, 1918 George R. I.

THE MESSAGE FROM KING GEORGE V TO THE ROYAL AIR FORCE. This was sent on Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, through Lord Weir, who was then President of the Air Council

MEN OF THE R.A.F. PROCEEDING FROM BUCKINGHAM PALACE with men of the Coldstream Guards to relieve the Guard after taking over at St. James's Palace on April 1

On April 1, 1943, the Royal Air Force celebrated its twenty-fifth birthday. To mark this great occasion, men of the R.A.F. Regiment were given the honour of mounting guard at Buckingham Palace: they remained on duty for forty-eight hours, after relieving the Coldstream Guards, and were then followed for another two days by a guard drawn from the R.A.F. Army Co-operation Command. This is the first occasion on which the R.A.F. has ever mounted guard at the Palace.

The Royal Air Force came into being in the midst of the last Great War—on April 1, 1918, when the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service were merged. At that time the new Force possessed some 1,300 first-line aircraft: a few months later, at the Armistice, this number had grown to 3,300 machines at the front—but the R.A.F. possessed in all 22,647 aircraft of all types, and had a total strength of 291,000 officers and men. Since 1918 the Force has seen active service in many parts of the Empire.

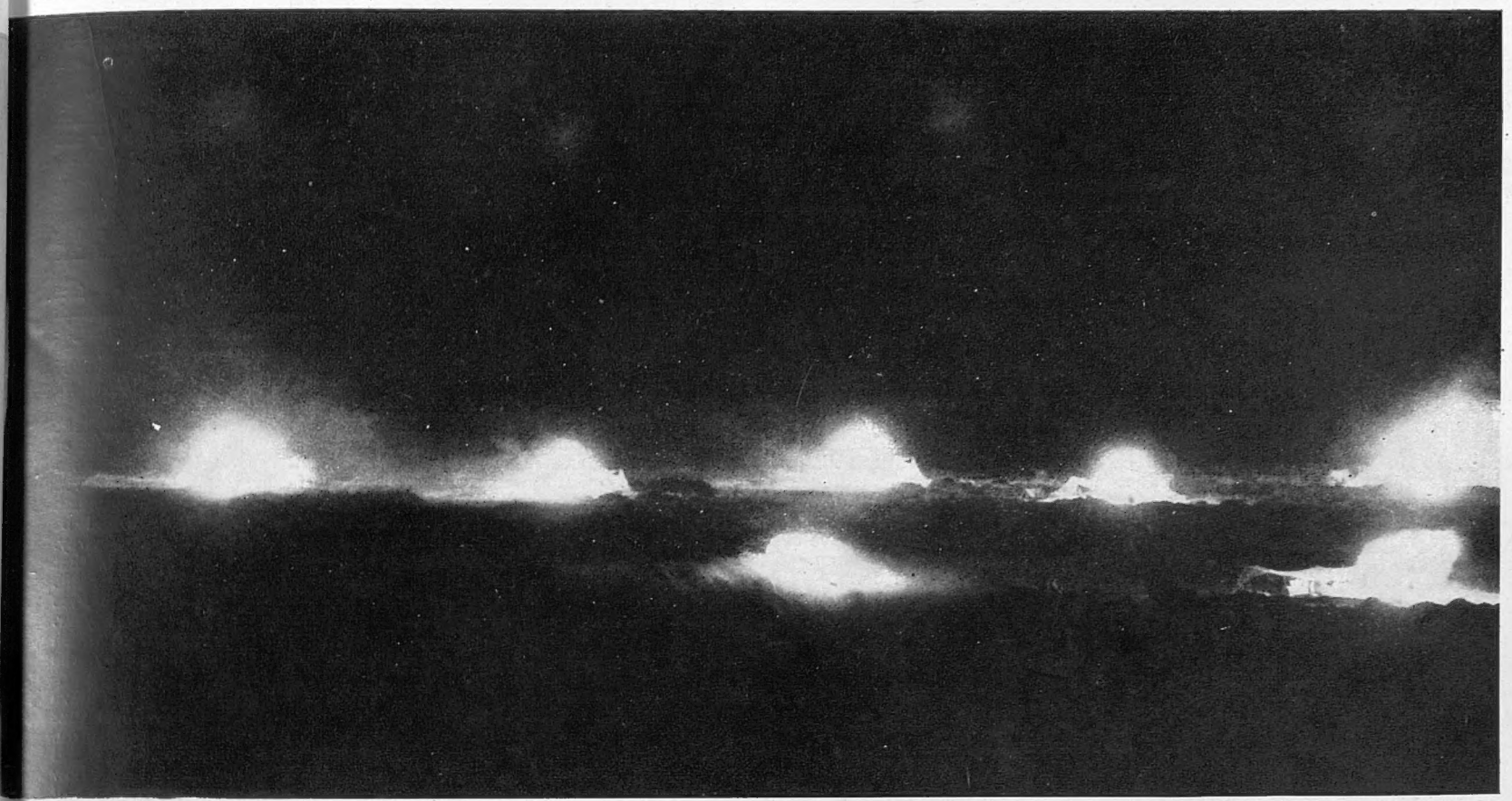
BRITISH and AMERICAN ATTACK in TUNISIA

The Onslaught on the Two Axis Armies by the Allies

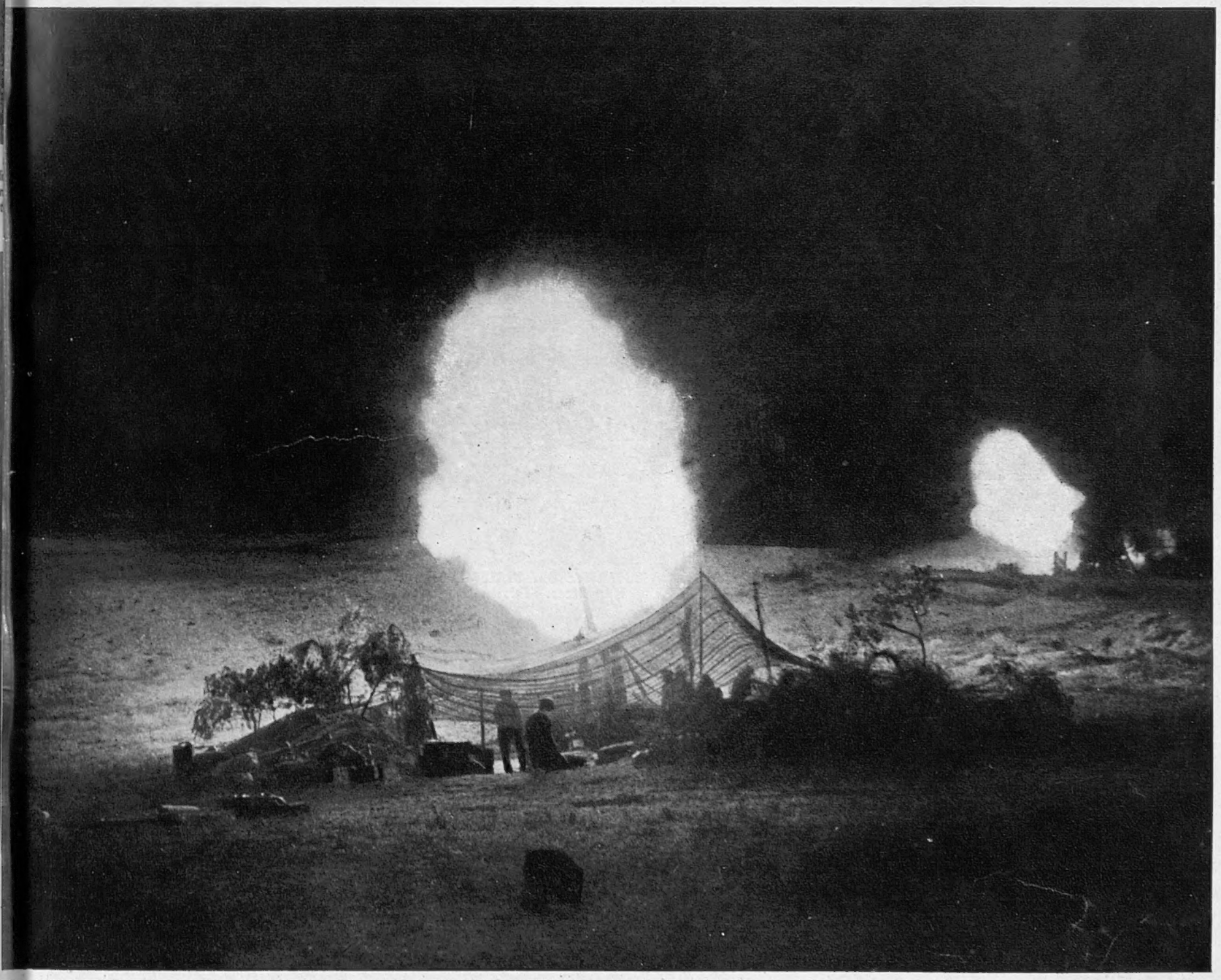
The Latest Action Pictures from the Battle Zones

THIS PICTURE HAS BEEN DESCRIBED IN NEW YORK AS "ONE OF THE MOST OUTSTANDING OF THE WAR." It shows two bombs bursting in close proximity to American patrol advancing with their trucks through the rolling Tunisian countryside. In the left foreground wounded men are receiving urgent medi attention while the bombs explode only a few yards away. It was just before the opening of General Montgomery's attack at Mareth that the American for began to push forward via Maknassy towards El Guettar in an attempt to frustrate Rommel's northward retreat. Heavy fighting has taken place in t sector as the Germans have striven to protect their flank

IN THE TUNISIAN HILLS—RATIONS FOR THE FIGHTING MEN OF THE FIRST ARMY. An Army Pioneer Company working at a "Compo" Ration Dump in North Tunisia has been handling 500 tons of box rations each day. The normal capacity of this dump is only 50 tons, but the efficiency of the Supply Transp pushed the figure up by ten times. To cope with this amount of work, native labour was introduced. The average stock held here is 2,000 tons, a the men work in shifts, allowing the work to be carried on continuously from midnight to midnight. The "Compo" Ration itself has received the high praise from both officers and men of the Allied Armies



HOW THE MARETH LINE WAS BROKEN : GUN FLASHES DURING THE TERRIFIC NIGHT BARRAGE OF SATURDAY, MARCH 20. Hundreds of guns first poured tons of explosives on a small sector less than a mile wide : for thirty minutes they hammered away at one strong-point held by the Germans, and then the infantry moved in to seize it. Then the guns shifted their fire, and their shells fell in a line in front of the Gurkhas ; a little later, it began creeping towards the Wadi Zigzaou and the troops followed close behind



THE SCENE FROM THE GUN-PITS AS THE EIGHTH ARMY ARTILLERY OPENED ITS DEVASTATING ASSAULT. In bright moonlight, the guns ranged on certain definite objectives through which a breach was eventually made and the Wadi Zigzaou was crossed. The barrage was precise and overwhelming in its effect, especially on the Italians, many of whom deserted and laid down their arms rather than go on facing the fury of the bombardment

SCANDINAVIA AFTER THREE YEARS of the NAZIS

The Resistance of the 12,000,000 Nordics who have Steadfastly Refused to Accept Hitler

By FERDINAND TUOHY

BY her occupation of Norway and Denmark, and by the hold she has exercised over Sweden, Germany has secured great profits strategically, in foodstuffs and raw materials, and in labour and industry. But she has utterly failed to reconcile 12,000,000 true Nordics to living voluntarily under German direction and control, however benignly decked out. Not 2 per cent. of Norwegians and Danes and not 5 per cent. of Swedes want a German perpetuation. From 95 to 98 per cent. throughout Scandinavia prefer, or long for, Allied victory, and an ever-growing number are working for it. Such is a true balance-sheet after three years.

Hitler took the Citadel of Copenhagen with a single company, and his bands were playing blithe airs in Oslo within an hour of disembarkation. Stockholm had to toe the line directly after. Hitler's reputed magic shook us all that April 9 of 1940. Yet early that morning, by the flickering light of two candles, a step had already been taken which was to spell Hitler's undoing.

It was at midnight that war came to Norway for the first time in 126 years, and during the next 7½ hours, while her 3,000,000 people slept, King Haakon VII and his advisers set a course which, as events were to prove, defeated Hitler's whole plan of northern conquest by sowing a spirit of resistance that has since spread to near neighbours. By 7.30 a.m. the King, Royal Family and the Government had been saved from falling into the hands of the Germans. In the same train went most M.P.s and important Civil Servants and many valuable documents. Twenty lorries were used to remove the £12,000,000 gold reserve under the noses of the Germans. More important, by escaping intact, the Government were able to direct the fighting in Norway for nearly two months, and to save for the Allies Norway's great mercantile fleet of over 1,000 ships complete with their crews. Scattered over the world, these had been ordered to the nearest Axis ports, but not a single captain failed to obey his Government's order to make for an Allied harbour.

The other day I found myself alone with King Haakon in a West End clubroom, and the temptation was strong to go across and say what was in my mind—how solidly he had built for the future. That adjective comes most readily for Norway's whole showing. Take her merchant navy. Considerably reduced now, this fleet—Nortraship, the biggest shipping concern in the world—almost entirely supports the Norwegian war effort.

No Nazi-trodden people have kept more steadily by their exiled King and Government than the Norwegians. Thousands have escaped across the North Sea to join the three armed forces, which have been rebuilt on foreign soil almost from nothing. When, in August 1940, it was decided to rebuild the Air Force, the personnel numbered 120. Since then thousands have been trained at Toronto, and the Spitfire squadrons which began operations some months ago have already shot down 35 Germans for certain, with dozens of "probables." The Navy is numerically the fourth largest serving with the United Nations, and the exploits of the corvette *Montbretia*, which sank or damaged six U-boats before she herself was lost, is typical of all the 60-odd units in the fleet. The Army has participated in six raids on Norway, and will one day form a valuable, if small, expeditionary force. All three arms operate under 47-year-old General Hansteen.

This fighting spirit in exile has been matched by resistance in the homeland. This has reposed on the welding together of powerful blocks like the "free" clergy who won't have anything to do with Quisling's bishops, the Teachers' Front, which refuses to pass on the Nazi creed to the children, and the 350,000 trade unionists. These last have the strongest underground movement of all. But the whole community participates, even to "300,000 sportsmen who, since 1940, have refused all Nazi-sponsored sport, the only 'legal' way of playing games in Norway." Over 100,000 workers slave on defence works, but they do their best to go slow, as do nearly all who are forced to produce for the Germans. One result has been the sending of 7,000 to concentration camps. Over 150 Norwegians have been executed. But such figures do not tell a tithe of the sufferings of Norwegians.

Now all men between 18 and 55 and all women between 21 and 40 have been conscripted for labour by Gauleiter Terboven. Those who don't register lose their food cards. This has caused a rise in the tempo of resistance. Norwegians know only too bitterly that their greatest trials still lie ahead. They know that very many hostages have been earmarked for execution at the first sign of assistance to Allied invasion. Norwegians meanwhile continue to "soften" the Germans by an extension of their "freezing" nerve-war. The Germans can hardly find anyone to talk to outside their own circle: cold stares and icy politeness are all they collect. As Steinbeck showed in *The Moon is Down*, this can produce madness in the long, cold northern winter.

Not the least service Norway has rendered concerns the effect her sufferings have had on the Swedes, who have been turned against Germany primarily by what they fear most for themselves—"Norwegian conditions."

It will be interesting to see what becomes of Norway's reported intention to link up after the war with the Atlantic nations, as a leading maritime Power anxious to be less tied to a dangerous Continent. Alone among the nations of Europe, Denmark had never been occupied by foreigners until the panzers rolled in three years ago. Three of the famous four freedoms she had enjoyed so long as no longer to notice them—freedom from want, freedom of speech and freedom of worship—and the fourth freedom, from fear, she would have had, too, but for the ever-present Prussian south of Jutland.

The Germans had thought out something extra special for the Danes. They were going to make themselves *systematisch beliebt*. "Here we have a wealthy little country, rich in butter and produce," they said. "No guns. The Danes are an easy-going lot. They will not make trouble if we stroke them nicely. We shall show the other neutrals that the Nazis and the New Order are better than they are said to be. We shall soon have a showpiece, a model Protectorate in little Denmark." After nearly three years of persistent wooing, the Germans had to turn to the Danish Government, complaining that "there is just one vast conspiracy against us." And small wonder, for, from being a prosperous and efficient nation, Denmark has been brought by Nazi exploitation to the verge of economic and financial collapse. Her famous agricultural system is ruined, inflation is near, industry is thrown out of gear and unemployment has never been anything like as high.

The net result of three years of "stroking" by the gentle Nazi was recently visible in election returns, which gave 68,000 votes for Germany and 2,000,000 against. It wasn't put as plainly as that, but the 2,000,000 shared their King's rejection of Hitler, when his Majesty said: "We are all longing for the day when our flag will fly once more over a free Denmark."

Yet the unfortunate fact has to be faced that Denmark has in Scavenius a thoroughgoing pro-Nazi Premier, and that the country's policy remains one of collaboration. Danes point out that there are two alternatives: either the insignificant Clausen Nazis would take over the Government, resting on the support of German bayonets, or the German Army itself would take control, operating through two proven bullies, General von Hanneken and Black Guardsman Werner Best. In either case Denmark would be thrown into a state approaching that of Norway. The best one can hope for, apparently, is that resistance and obstruction will increase under the broadcast guidance of Christmas Moeller, the Free Danish leader who escaped to London last year. A good omen in this respect was the way in which Copenhagen accepted the first bombings by the R.A.F.

"Cold Shoulder" and "Churchill" clubs have taken root, and an escaped journalist reports that sabotage, strikes and "go-slow" are catching on. "The Allies may be sure of a delirious welcome if and when they arrive," he adds. "But don't forget how Denmark is already helping. About 400,000 tons of Danish shipping sails under the British flag, and the same amount keeps the life-lines open on behalf of others of the Allies. Then there is Greenland. In order to prevent the Germans going there, our Minister in Washington gave the United States full access for the duration of the war. In addition to its air bases and meteorological information, Greenland produces cryolite for aircraft."

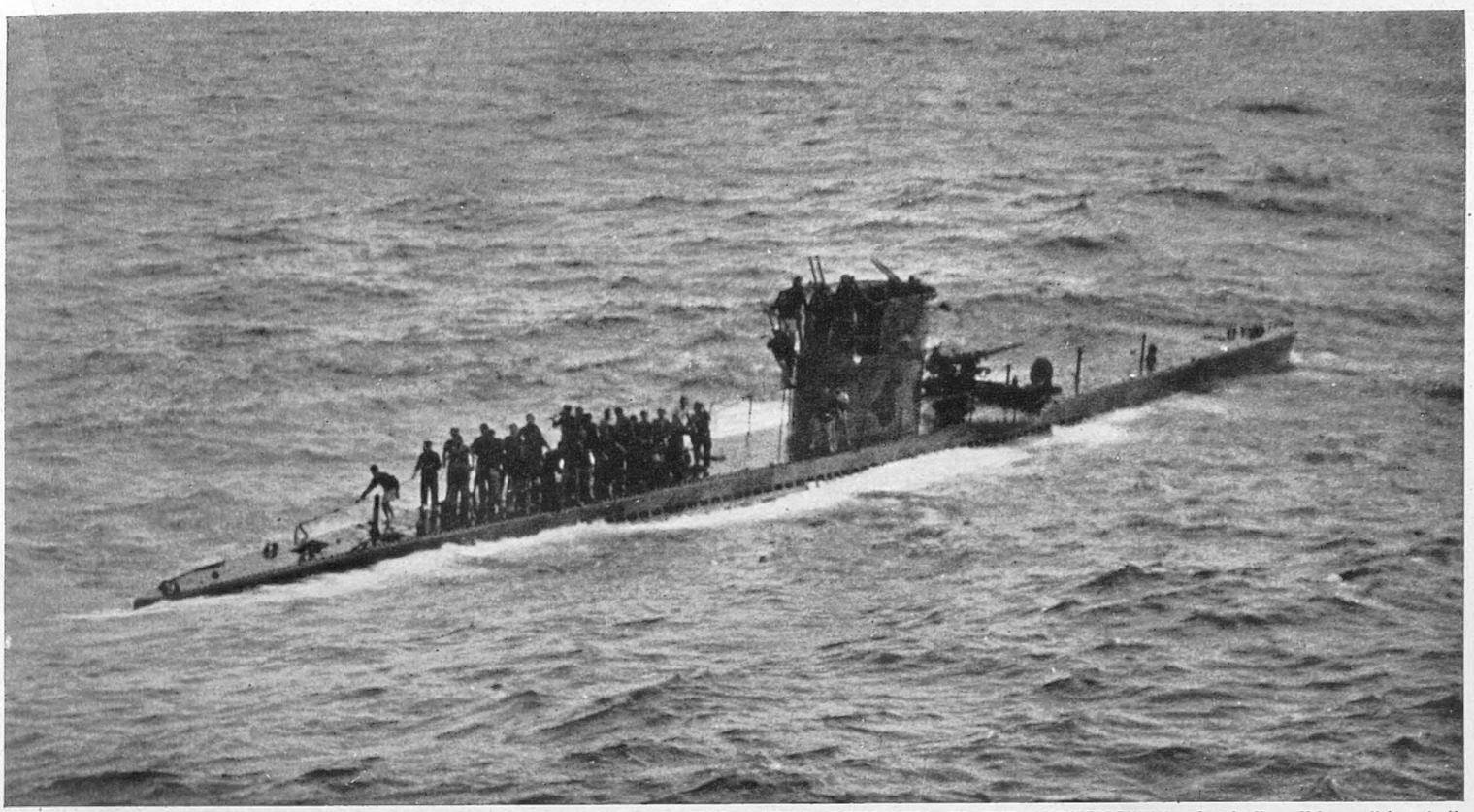
As I was present in 1920 at the taking over of part of Sleswig by Denmark, I asked a representative Dane if his country would again lay claim to this territory. His reply struck me by its good sense. "We must always keep in view the great difficulties of being burdened with more Germans." Denmark will assuredly figure more prominently in the peace settlement than she did last time. I have little space to say anything about Sweden, which is perhaps as well, as the Swedes are just now not quite happy about themselves. A Left paper, *Trots Allt*, recently said far more than any Allied critic would dare, when it wrote, concerning a British protest, that "the policy of our Foreign Minister is apparently the private concern of Mr. Gunther. But it won't be possible to talk about Mr. Gunther's private concern in the future when the Swedish people are called upon to pay for their lack of neutrality now."

The Germans put pressure on Sweden now and then—as when they latterly stopped imports from South America. At the same time, they send "furlough" troops through Sweden and they use the Swedish sky for the smuggling of arms. It is a weird mix-up.

One thing we need to remember is that the Swedes have to live next to the Russians, "the hereditary enemy," and that they fear an Allied victory would not sufficiently protect them from Joe Stalin or his successor. That seems to be another argument for international policing in a big way on the Baltic.

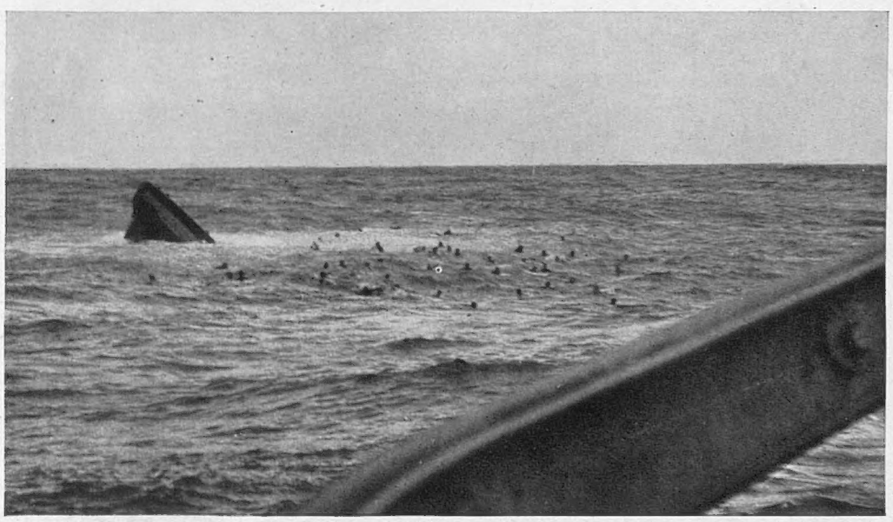
THE R.A.F. FIRE COPENHAGEN FACTORIES WORKING FOR THE NAZIS: These two pictures, received recently through a neutral channel, show scenes in the Danish capital after Mosquito bombers of the R.A.F. had raided factories working for the Germans in Copenhagen. That the local fire services were "overwhelmed" as a result of the raid is shown by the fact that the only firemen in the picture have their backs to one blaze—which is receiving no attention at all—while they play on the fire to the right. Only one of their two hoses is giving out any water: another proof of the inability of the local brigades to deal with the huge fires caused by this successful R.A.F. blitz

A SUGAR FACTORY BLAZES FURIOUSLY IN COPENHAGEN after a recent raid by R.A.F. Mosquitoes. This building is known to be next to a factory turning out Diesel engines for the Nazi U-boats



BROUGHT TO THE SURFACE BY A CONCENTRATED DEPTH-CHARGE ATTACK BY TWO BRITISH DESTROYERS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, the Italian U-boat "Asteria" surfaces for the last time. Her crew line up on deck and wait for the Royal Navy to pick them up

AN ITALIAN SUBMARINE IS SUNK



THE END OF THE ITALIAN SUBMARINE "ASTERIA": The crew have been hurled into the water as the U-boat sinks, and are swimming towards the British destroyer waiting to pick them up. Practically the whole of the crew were rescued

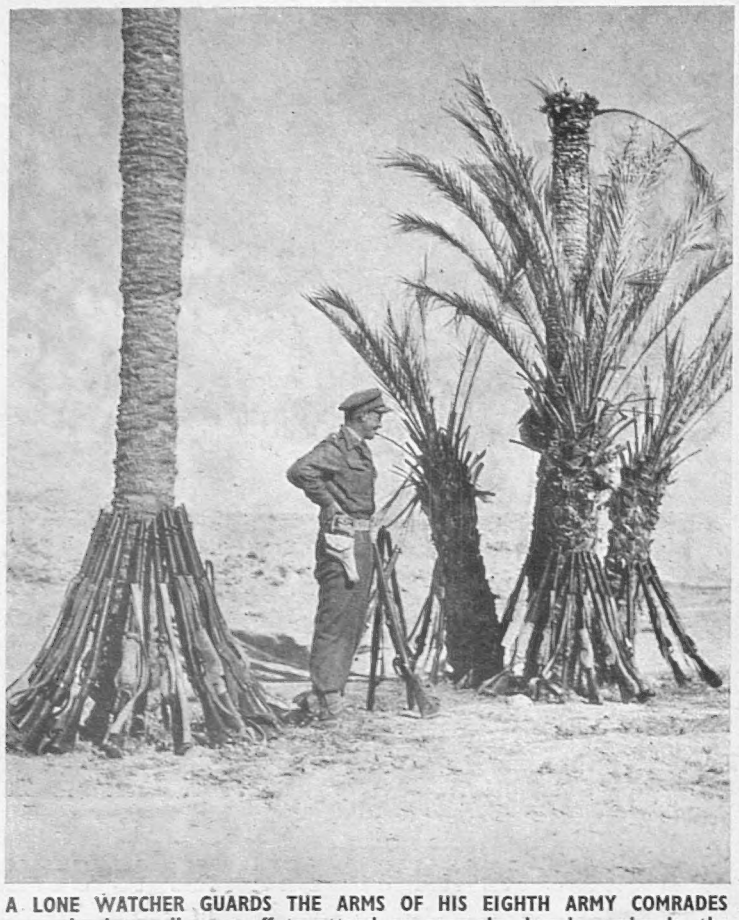
ITALIAN U-BOAT PRISONERS. Wrapped in blankets and loaned duffle coats, the seamen are being landed from a British destroyer for internment after their submarine had been forced to the surface and then sunk by the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean

TWO OF THE ITALIAN SEAMEN, clad in nothing but a loaned blanket after having been picked up after the sinking of their submarine

The war against the U-boat in every one of the Seven Seas is grim and bitter; nowhere more so than in the Mediterranean, where the Royal Navy has been hitting hard at the Italians for nearly three years. Not all our successes against the U-boats are announced—for obvious reasons; but in the latest edition of "Jane's Fighting Ships" is this significant note at the head of the section dealing with Italy's submarine fleet: "A considerable number of Italian submarines have been lost since June 10, 1940"! The two pictures at the top of this page show the end of one of them; in this case, the *Asteria*. The vessel had been brought to the surface by depth-charges launched by two British destroyers working in concert. As the U-boat came up, on an even keel, her crew lined the narrow deck to await rescue by the Royal Navy. Shortly afterwards, however, the submarine's bow rose up and the crew were precipitated into the water. Practically all of them were saved, and eventually landed by destroyer for subsequent internment. The two pictures showing the *Asteria*'s end were taken by a British Naval officer

AT THE MARETH LINE

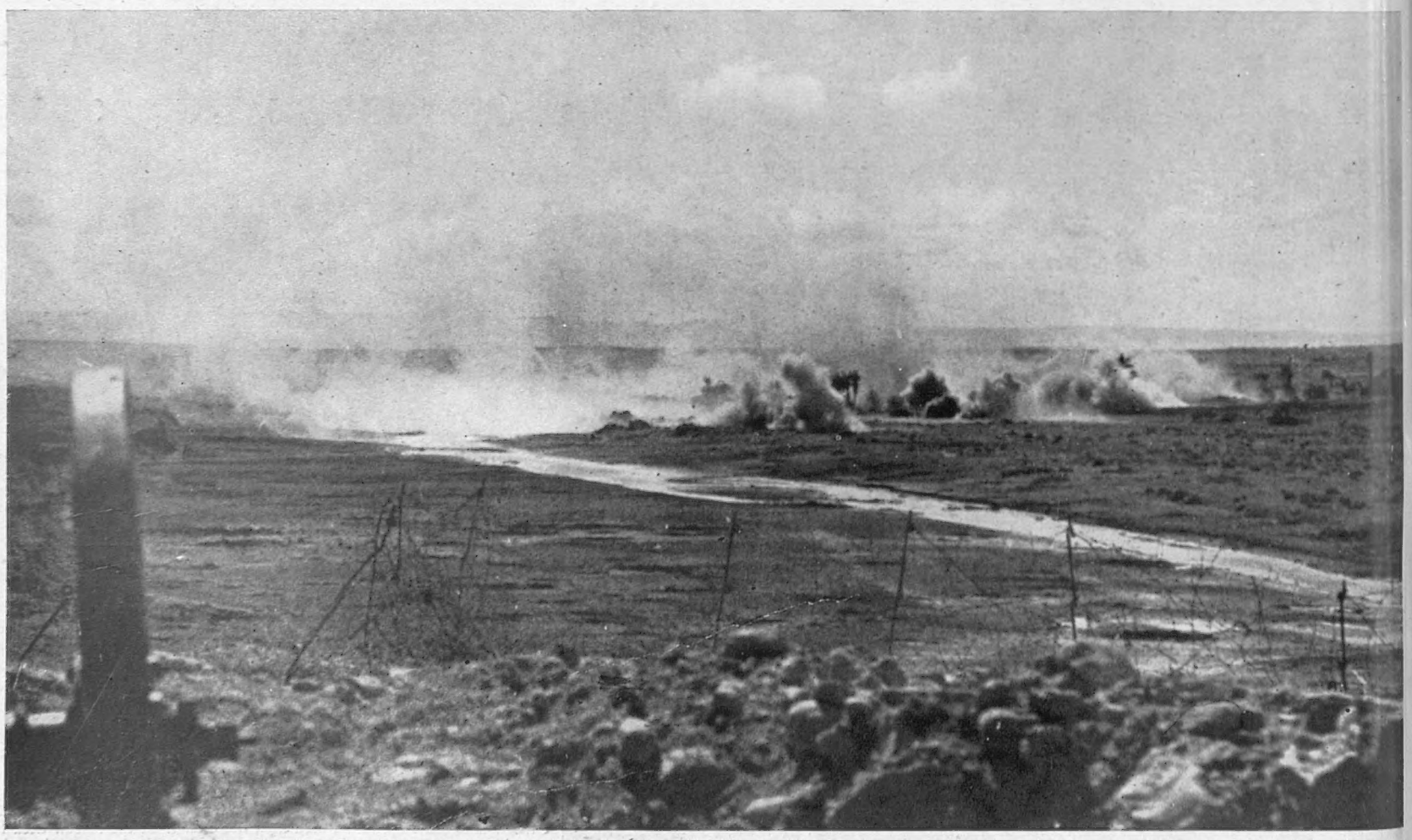
Dramatic Pictures of the Capture of the Fortifications by the Men of the Eighth Army



A LONE WATCHER GUARDS THE ARMS OF HIS EIGHTH ARMY COMRADES who have all gone off to attend an open-air church service in the desert before the opening of the great offensive

The Eighth Army have done it again! After having chased Rommel's Afrika Korps right up to the Mareth Line, they have now burst through the fortifications there and are pursuing their old enemies up the length of Tunisia towards Bizerta and Tunis—with the R.A.F. in close co-operation! General Montgomery employed his favourite outflanking tactics to achieve this happy result: finding his frontal assault on Mareth held up, he switched a strong force (led by General Freyberg, V.C.) round the Matmata Mountains to hit at the enemy's right flank at El Hamma. The pictures reproduced here are amongst the first to be received from the field of battle. The earlier stages of the fighting on the Mareth Line will be found to be fully covered, in diagram and drawing, on pages 46 - 47 of the present issue

BRITISH SOLDIERS MAKING THEIR WAY ALONG AN ENEMY ANTI-TANK DITCH within the Mareth fortified line. This, and similar ingenious defences, had to be abandoned by Rommel after General Montgomery's outflanking move to El Hamma



THE TERRIFIC BARRAGE OF BRITISH SHELLS BURSTING OVER THE ENEMY-HELD MARETH POSITIONS—A very close-up view of the bombardment which beat down on the Germans for three days without cessation: to this was also added a very heavy air attack which left the enemy numb and dazed with its fury. It has been stated by competent observers that the barrage at Mareth was even more devastating than that which heralded the advance at El Alamein. It will be noted from the above picture that the ground is still heavy with the rain which contributed so largely to our check in the Wadi Zigzaou frontal assault

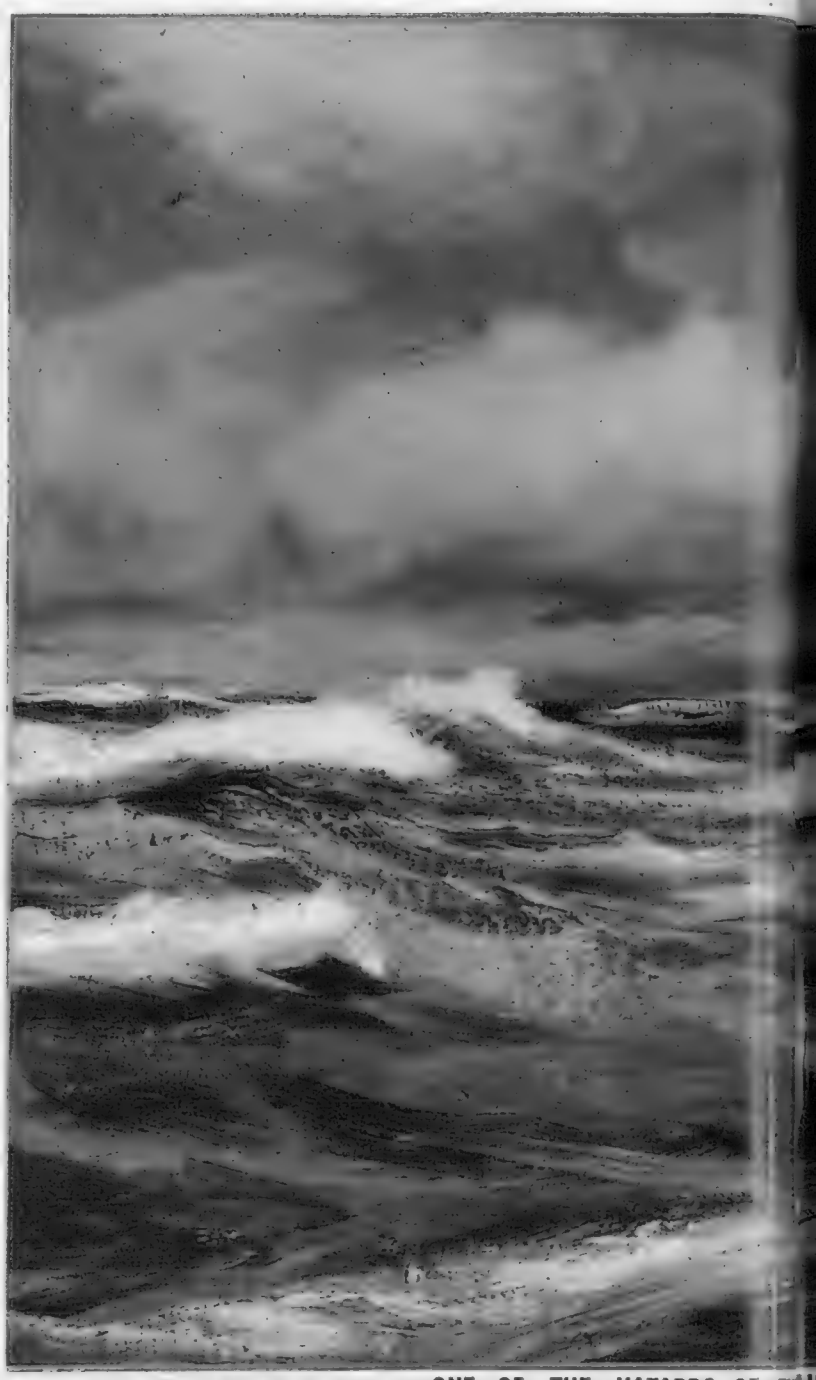
FRONT LINE FIRST-AID POST BY THE SIDE OF THE WADI ZIGZAOU, across which the first bridgehead of the Eighth Army was established. The crossing of this Wadi was effected by night, but the causeway which was subsequently built collapsed owing to the sudden rains. The swampy nature of the ground in the Wadi can be gauged by the large pools of water to be seen in this picture

A SCENE REMINISCENT OF THE EARLIER BATTLES IN EGYPT AND LIBYA: Hundreds of prisoners being marched away under scant escort in the Ksiba Ouest sector, 1,000 yards north of the Wadi Zigzaou. Very largely, the prisoners captured were Italian: once again Rommel had decided to sacrifice his Axis partners whilst making off with his own Afrika Korps! Many of the Italians were stupefied after the fury of the bombardment by land and air and appeared to be only too glad to be out of the conflict. As previously in Libya, but few guards were required for the hundreds and hundreds of docile warriors

FLYING over the MEDITERRANEAN

Where the R.A.F. Continue to Harry All Forms of Shipping from Tunisia to Crete

PACKING A PILOT'S DINGHY and checking over its equipment. Every item must be in its proper place, and every item must be capable of performing its proper function the exact moment it is needed. The W.A.A.F. on the right was formerly a respirator examiner and is now working as a Safety Equipment Assistant. The dinghies used by the R.A.F. to-day are wonders of compactness and craftsmanship



ONE OF THE HAZARDS OF TH
his navigator were forced do
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UNENDING WATCH OVER THE MEDITERRANEAN CONVOYS: A picture taken through the window of a Lockheed Hudson aircraft on patrol above the merchantmen. Hundreds of vessels have been escorted through dangerous waters in this fashion

FOR eight days and nights two Royal Air Force officers drifted in dinghies in the Mediterranean. When rescued on the ninth day they were down to their last half-bottle of fresh water and two tins of emergency rations.

The men were the pilot and wireless-operator-navigator of a twin-engined fighter which crashed into the sea about forty miles off Sollum. The twenty-six-year-old pilot told their story when he was in hospital recovering from exposure.

"We were doing escort work," he said, "when suddenly our starboard engine cut and the aircraft crashed into the sea. It sank in a few seconds, just as I got out of the pilot's seat. My colleague just scrambled out ahead of me. We got into the dinghy. Later, we saw our chaps returning from the raid, but we had nothing with which to attract their attention.

"The following day we were sighted by one of the Air/Sea Rescue aircraft sent to look for us. They dropped another dinghy and a sea rescue kit beside us. I got into the new dinghy and we tied the two dinghies together; otherwise we would have drifted apart in no time, as the sea was very rough. Several times our dinghies were overturned. Aircraft could not put down in such rough water.

"For the first three days we lived on the barley sugar from the rescue kit. We did not use any water at all during that period. Aircraft dropped distress signals for us to use. On the ninth morning we sighted two motor

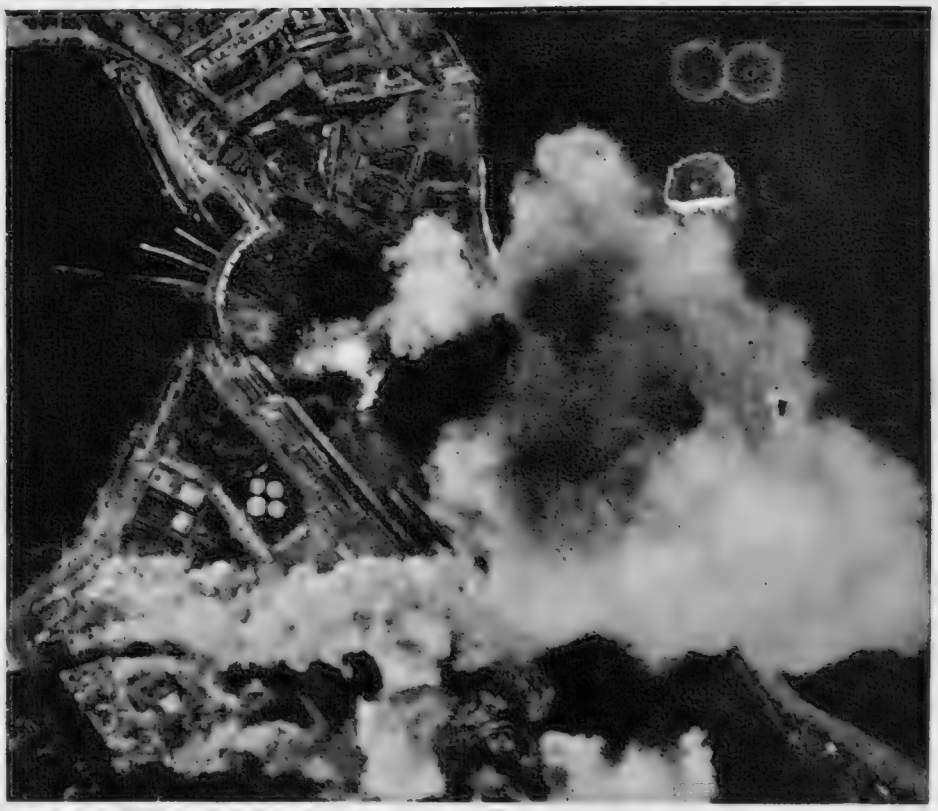
AIR WAR IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. TWO R.A.F. OFFICERS WHO WERE ADRIFT IN A DINGHY IN THE GREAT INLAND SEA FOR EIGHT DAYS. This pilot and off Sollum in the course of flying operations; during their long period in the sea they were subjected to a novel form of assault—an attack by a swordfish which to upset their frail rubber craft. There are large numbers of these big and dangerous fish in the Mediterranean—*Drawing by Montague Dawson*

AN ENEMY SHIP ON FIRE OFF ADAMS VILLAGE, after an attack by bombers and torpedo-carrying aircraft of the R.A.F. on shipping in the harbour at Melos, Crete. A column of spray and smoke from a bomb-burst is seen near the burning vessel

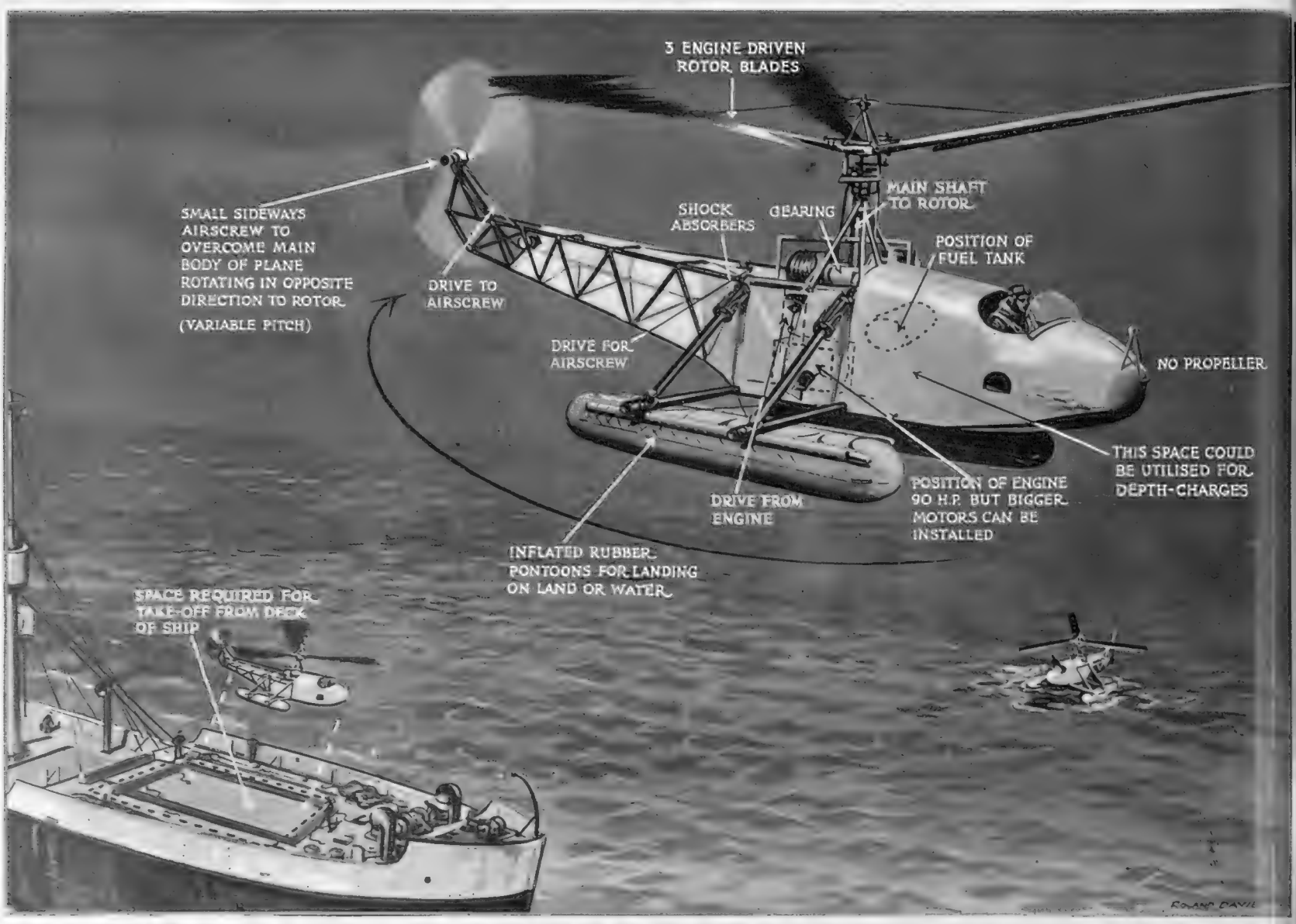
torpedo boats. We fired a distress signal, which was seen by the M.T.B.s and they picked us up.

"One incident seems funny now, but it wasn't so funny at the time. A swordfish, about six feet long, came poking at our dinghies, and we could do nothing about it. However, its sword could not have been so very sharp, for, although we could hear a little click as it rammed us, it did us no damage. We didn't see a single enemy aircraft all the time."

The "sword" of a swordfish is, in reality, a bony projection of the upper jaw: it is with this weapon that they stab their enemies. Swordfish are very numerous in the Mediterranean.



HEAVY U.S. BOMBERS CARRY OUT A RAID on a railway south of the Train-Ferry terminus, and in the neighbourhood of the Customs House and Infantry Barracks, at Messina, in Sicily. Columns of smoke are seen rising from buildings on the quayside and near the Ferry operating-gear at the terminus (in the bottom centre of the picture)



THE NEW WEAPON AGAINST THE ATLANTIC U-BOATS? THE HELICOPTER INVENTED BY SIKORSKY (of which we have ordered an unspecified number) AND HOW IT WORKS. There are no wings, no propeller at the nose and no tail: lift and propulsion are by rotor blades. The drawing in the bottom left-hand corner shows how the aircraft rises (or lands) from a small deck space on a merchantman—*Drawing by Roland Davies*

PHASES of the AIR WAR

Details of the New U.S. Helicopter. The Night and Day Bombing of Germany

—With Special Sphere Drawings

In a recent issue of The Sphere, we published photographs of the new Vought-Sikorsky helicopter which will probably figure in the campaign against the U-boats in the Atlantic: above we publish a drawing to show how this strange aircraft works.

A study of the drawing will show that there are no wings, tail, propeller, elevators or other of the features hitherto considered essential to make an aircraft fly. In place of these are the rotor blades above the engine which revolve horizontally; at the tail is a small, sideways-facing airscrew driven through an extension shaft from the engine. This airscrew is placed where the rudder would normally be situated. By variations in the pitch of this small airscrew, and of the main rotors above, the helicopter can be flown upward, forward, sideways, backward and in a circle, with absolute precision at any speed within its range.

It can fly from 0 m.p.h. up to about 100 m.p.h. forward; and from 0 m.p.h. up to about 25 m.p.h. in other directions. It can alight on either land or sea—the one undercarriage sufficing for both purposes, as the helicopter requires no forward run on taking-off or landing, and thus requires no wheels.

The whole aircraft weighs just over one ton, and it can carry pilot and passenger. It has been suggested that the Sikorsky be fitted up to carry either bombs or depth-charges. In such fashion, it could be stowed on the deck of a merchantman, and take the air the moment the vessel comes under the threat of attack by a U-boat. The space the helicopter would require on the deck of its "carrier" is very small, but the blades of the rotor would need a certain amount of space for take-off and landing. A vessel of 10,000 tons or over should be capable of accommodating a helicopter.

It has been said that the outcome of the Battle of the Atlantic depends on our capacity effectively to cover the 500- or 600-miles gap in mid-ocean, where, at present, our long-range aircraft cannot reach. Armed with depth-charges or bombs, the helicopter might go a long way towards solving this problem.

Mr. Roland Davies's drawing above shows the salient features of the Sikorsky helicopter's construction, and how they operate during actual flying. At present a 90-h.p. engine has been fitted, but a bigger motor could be installed if this were considered necessary.

THE VOUGHT-SIKORSKY HELICOPTER demonstrating how it can land or take off from the water without making even a splash. It needs no landing or take-off run, but rises straight up into the air

AN EARLY-TYPE MACHINE. This wingless autogiro caused something of a sensation when it was first demonstrated in England in 1933. It possessed none of the normal controls of an aircraft such as wings, rudder, ailerons or elevators, and was controlled by a single joy-stick. It was the invention of Señor Cierva

THE STING IN THE NOSE OF THE MOSQUITO. The bomb-aimer in his forward position, with his hand on the bomb-release mechanism. It was this type of aircraft which bombed Berlin by daylight

BOMBING-UP A TWIN-ENGINED MOSQUITO prior to a raid on Germany. This aircraft is very fast and it can carry four 500-lb. bombs in its racks—or nearly one ton. It is being used for the daylight bombing of enemy territory

With the new Mosquito bomber, the R.A.F. is now carrying war *by daylight* into the heart of the Reich. It is a twin-engined reconnaissance bomber, one of the fastest of its type in production. The Mosquito makes long-distance attacks without fighter escorts, depending on its speed (once its bomb-load has been disposed of) to out-distance enemy interceptor fighters. Its capabilities were amply demonstrated during the recent daylight raids on Oslo and on Berlin (when it interrupted the speeches by Goebbels and Göring). It is a weapon which the enemy will find hard to combat. Of simple wooden construction, the Mosquito has two Rolls-Royce engines: in addition to its bomb-load of four 500-lb. bombs, its offensive armament may consist of four 20-mm. cannon- and four ·303 machine-guns. The undercarriage and tail wheel are both retractable; and the aircraft has the De Havilland three-bladed type of propeller. The dimensions of the plane are—span, 54 ft. 2 ins. overall; length, 40 ft. 9½ ins.; height, 15 ft. 3 ins.

THE HALIFAX WHICH LOOPED THE LOOP—a strange experience for the crew of a big bomber during a recent raid over Hamburg. When attacked by a Messerschmitt, the fighter came straight on at the bomber: as a result of the very violent avoiding action which the bomber pilot had to take, his aircraft first stood up on its tail and then went over on to its back and looped—*Drawing by Roland Davies*

It is not usual for a big bomber to indulge in such aerobatics as that depicted in the above drawing. This is what happened during the raid on Hamburg when the loop was performed by the giant Halifax. The pilot-officer-gunner had fired only fifty shots at a Messerschmitt pilot, who had attacked the bomber head-on after the latter had released its bomb-load. But those fifty shots were sufficient. The Nazi aeroplane burst into flames and crashed. A second fighter then came on at the Halifax: he flew straight down the path of the bullets, and the pilot must have been killed, for the fighter made no effort to pull away and it didn't fire a shot. Then things began to happen. To avoid the fighter, the Halifax pilot pulled the giant bomber up so quickly that it stood upon its tail: the engines stalled, and the Halifax went over on its back and looped again before it could be brought under control. The bomber dropped about 5,000 ft. in its loops, and when it straightened out only three engines would function. But the Halifax came home successfully

The Battles in Tunisia (I)

The GREAT STRUGGLE for the MARETH LINE

And the Turning Movement of the Eighth Army towards El Hamma

—Special Drawings and Diagrams in Illustration of General Montgomery's Great Tactical Success

THE TOWN OF GABES, the small coast town behind the Mareth Line, which served as one of Rommel's principal bases in Southern Tunisia. It is now in our hands

The forcing of the enemy from the Mareth stronghold was not, in its initial stage, an easy operation. A very different type of country faced the Eighth Army when the infantry had advanced towards the enemy's fortified lines stretching from the sea to the Matmata Hills. The area selected by General Montgomery for his break-through lay between the sea itself and the village of Mareth; and the plan was for the infantry to rush the Wadi Zigzaou and to establish themselves on the higher ground beyond.

They were then to be followed by tanks, anti-tank guns and mobile artillery. In order to enable them to do this, a Causeway had to be built across the rough bottom of the Wadi, which in some places is 70 ft. wide. All might have gone well and according to plan but for a minor spate of water, which flooded some of the ground which had to be covered by the Causeway. This influx evidently affected the sandy nature of the Wadi bottom and rendered the task of the Royal Engineers more difficult than it would otherwise have been.

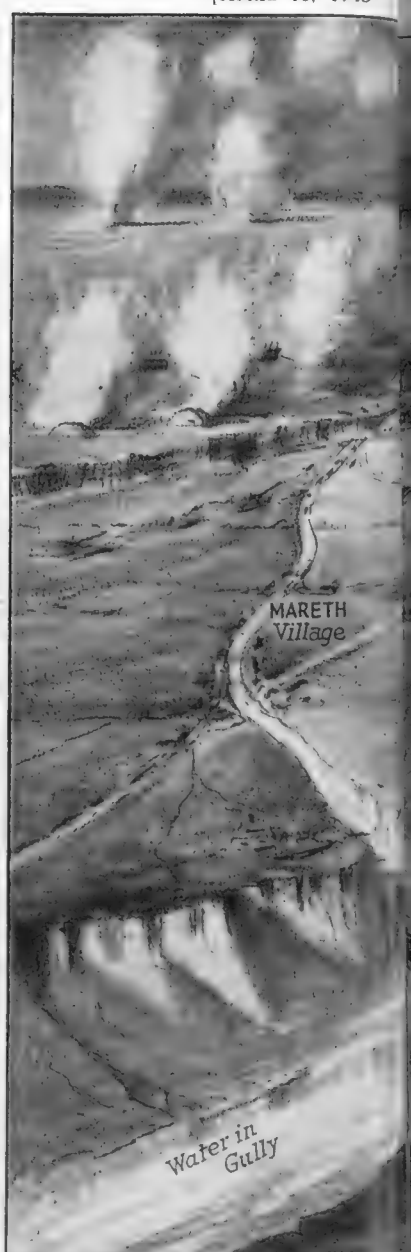
In the event the infantry, mounting on one another's shoulders and also using scaling ladders, swarmed up the steep 15-ft. natural wall and gained the ground above. Sappers helped them in this task by blasting away portions of the cliffs; and the infantry went on to capture a strongly-constructed gun fortress. They fought their way to left and right against enemy machine-gun nests and other impediments. At one point they had to negotiate another deep obstacle in the shape of a mined tank-ditch.

After the passage of some hours they had occupied an area some 5,000 yards in width and 1,000 yards in depth. Then, with most of their ammunition spent, they awaited the arrival of the mobile artillery. But this failed to appear—in any effective numbers. The reason lay in the difficulty in building the Causeway across the Wadi Zigzaou sufficiently strong to take the strain of more than the lightest form of mounted gun. Under intense fire from concealed machine-gun posts and from more distant artillery, the sappers drew their wooden fascines and canvas bags filled with ballast to the desired spot.

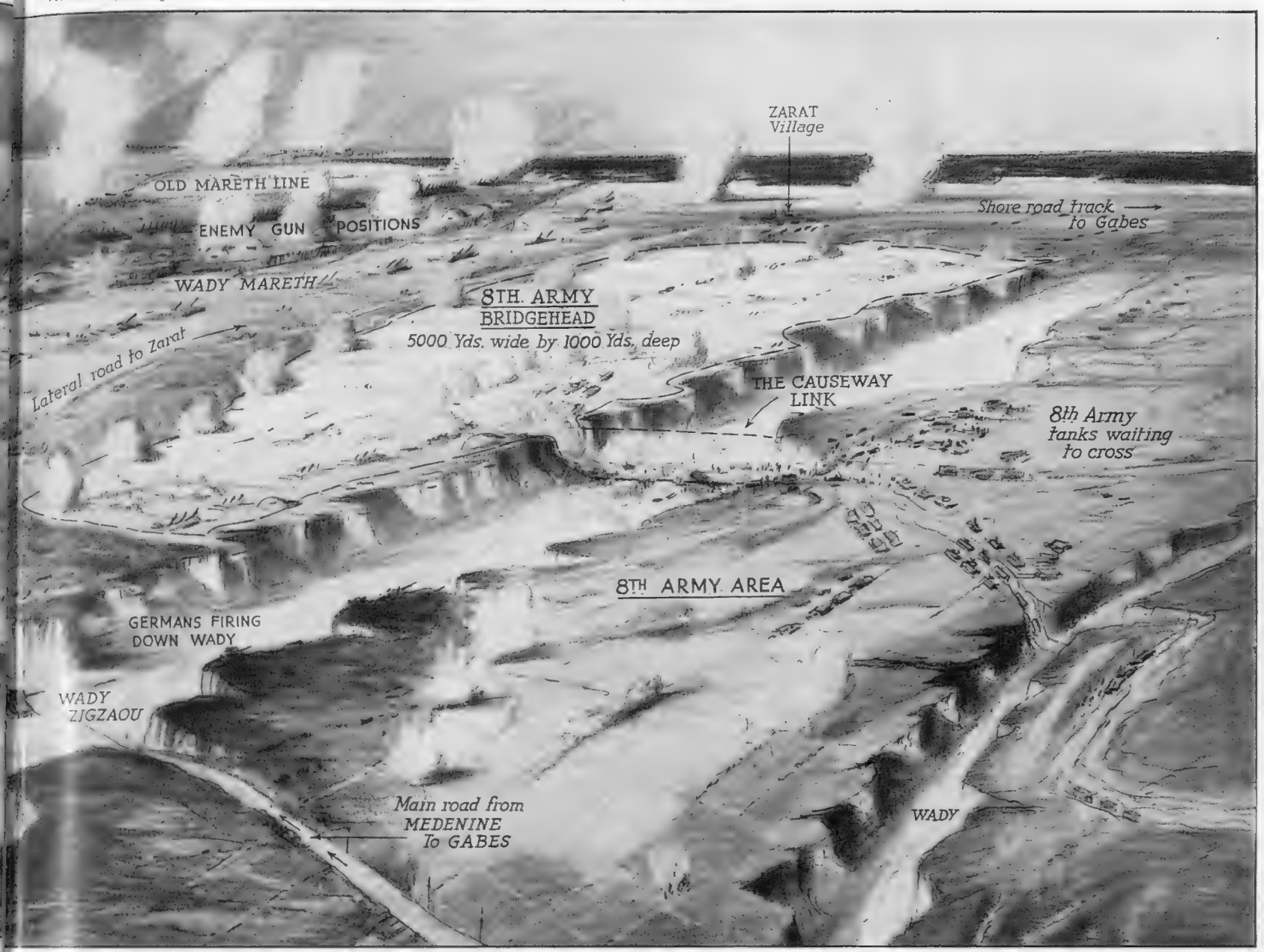
Fighting against desperate odds, they succeeded in forming a crossing whereby a certain number of men and some lighter vehicles were enabled to cross to the enemy's ground. The boggy nature of the site, however, evidently freed the water, which stood in pools of varying depths around the crossing and prevented the construction of a road strong enough to bear the heavier weapons, ammunition and supply trains waiting to pass over. The Causeway sank and broke under the strain.

Although very largely foiled in this first attempt, however, the Eighth Army infantry refused to surrender altogether the ground which they had gained. After a pause for re-forming, renewed assaults were made upon Rommel's bastions, and, coupled with the success of the flanking movement against El Hamma, the whole position was eventually recaptured.

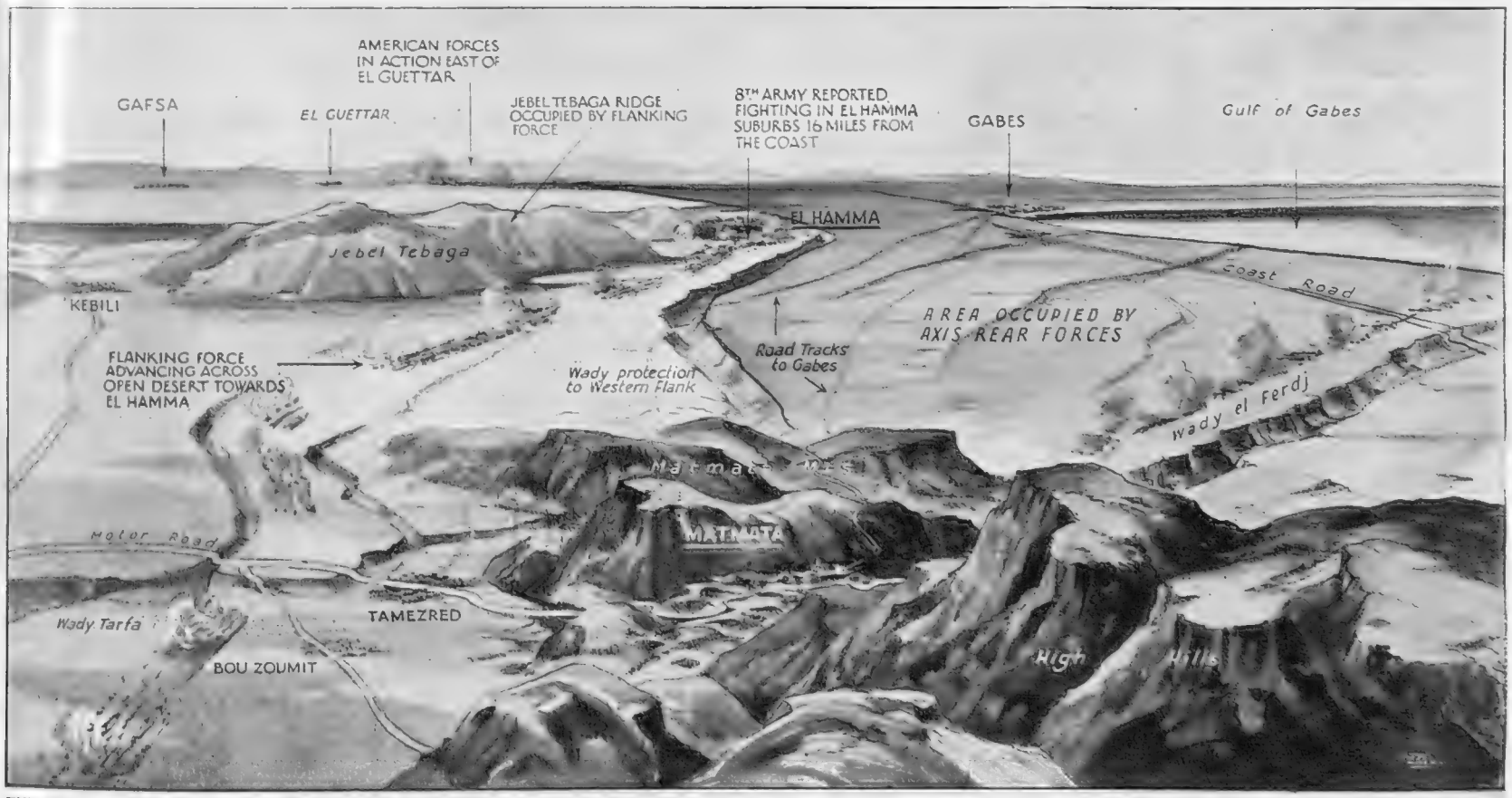
Below—**THE ROMMEL DEFENSIVE AREA AROUND MARETH shown as a conventional mediæval "fortress"** *—Drawing by H. P. Burton.* If this be regarded as a somewhat simplified formalised presentation of the situation at Mareth before Montgomery's break-through, there is nevertheless a very great element of truth in this method of presenting the problem which confronted the Eighth Army. What is known as the "Mareth position" is bounded by Gabes, Mareth, Matmata and El Hamma. It comprises an area of some 750 square miles, within which had been concentrated some 80,000 first-class fighting men: the Germans were slightly less than 40,000, and the Italians slightly more. Inside the quadrilateral "fortress" were believed to be elements of the German 15th and 21st Panzer Divisions, the 90th Light Motorised Division and the 164th Infantry Division. The Italians were represented by the remainder of the Ariete and Littorio Armoured Divisions, and the Spezia, Pistoia, Trieste and Young Fascist Infantry Divisions—probably all of them much below their normal establishment. The total enemy strength in Tunisia is put at 250,000 men



THE INITIAL ASSAULT ON ROMMEL'S … which broke down as the result …



FORTIFIED LINES AT MARETH. THE BRIDGEHEAD FORMED BY THE EIGHTH ARMY—5,000 yards wide by 1,000 yards deep; and the building of THE CAUSEWAY, flooding. The lighter area is that originally captured by the Eighth Army; the darker area is the territory held by the Germans during this phase of the fighting (see notes at left)—*Drawing by Percy Home*



THE SUCCESSFUL FLANKING MOVEMENT OF THE EIGHTH ARMY TOWARDS EL HAMMA. Rommel's westward flank was based on the Matmata Hills; Montgomery's columns worked round this by way of a natural wadi towards the Tebaga Ridge, as shown above—*Drawing by E. G. Lambert*

Simultaneously with the frontal infantry assault on the main Mareth position depicted in the larger drawing above, General Montgomery had also despatched a force across the open desert to the west of the Matmata hill country towards El Hamma, at the western end of the Gabes Gap. The enemy was prepared for this flanking move, but, as events proved, was unable to resist the threat to his rear which it involved. Earlier in the battle, the enemy had stated that they had observed a concentration of troops at Kasr Rhilane: it was probably from somewhere in this region that the British outflanking columns started across the difficult, but not impossible, desert. They negotiated the rough stretches, crossed the secondary motor road to Matmata, and then pressed on towards the sickle-shaped Tebaga Ridge. This was occupied at its western end, and the British forces then prepared for the assault upon El Hamma, a village or townlet occupying part of an oasis at the western end of the Gabes Gap. Soon El Hamma had fallen into the hands of the Eighth Army. The original flanking force was rapidly reinforced when General Montgomery found that the frontal assault was proving difficult; in face of this augmentation, the enemy decided that the moment for retreat had come

HOW THE EIGHTH ARMY INFANTRY SCALED THE PRECIPITOUS SIDES OF THE WADI ZIGZAOU, to form the first breach in the Mareth Line and to establish a bridgehead, which was later abandoned in part—*Drawing by E. Byatt*

The Battles in Tunisia (II)

THE SCALING OF THE WADI WALLS

And the Destruction of Enemy Tanks on the Field of Battle—*Special Sphere Drawings*

THE first operation in the attack on the enemy's position at the Mareth Line was the rushing of the Wadi Zigzaou. It was necessary to take this on the run, as it were, for it constituted a natural defence line heavily guarded by concealed machine-gun posts and other light artillery designed specially to meet infantry assault. The men scrambled down into the wadi, which was half-flooded by a recent small spate from the hills. The sides of the wadi had been blasted by sappers on the Eighth Army side, to provide an easier way down; the men rushed across under severe fire, and at once started scrambling on to one another's backs and using scaling-ladders for the task of reaching the higher ground beyond. These scaling movements had been practised by the special assault troops beforehand; soon they had broken down the local resistance, captured a large enemy concrete strong-point, and pressed on towards the inner defences of the Mareth position. All the while the sappers were at work clearing impediments in the wadi, so that more troops could take part in the assault. Their work was continued under increasingly heavy fire. This part of the initial operation was successful, the assault troops occupying an area of some 5,000 yards long by 1,000 yards deep (as indicated in the large drawing on the preceding page).

On right—**A NIGHT SCENE IN THE KSAR RHILANE REGION, during the Mareth battle, with enemy tanks and lorries ablaze after a heavy bombing attack by the Allies**—*Drawing by E. Byatt*

As is now well known, one of Montgomery's most successful moves was the outflanking movement towards El Hamma. This began in the Ksar Rhilane area, where the Germans state that they first observed our concentrations quite early in the Mareth battle. Ksar Rhilane lies about 40 miles to the west of the Line. In this area, R.A.F. bombers, fighter-bombers and fighters carried out a series of successful sorties against the Axis, and set fire to numbers of enemy vehicles, which burnt themselves out all over the desert. In this drawing, Mr. Byatt shows the scene on the road to the village of Hallouf, near Rhilane. The glare from the blazing tanks was visible for miles in all directions

On left—**DURING THE ATTACK AT MARETH: A field ambulance of the Indian Medical Service in action during the operations. The casualty is a member of a Gurkha Battalion which was attacking a German position in the hills**

THE ENEMY OF THE TANK: The 6-pdrs. in action. These anti-tank weapons have been used in large numbers and to deadly purpose—in Tunisia as previously in Libya and Tripolitania. They are quite capable of accounting for even the biggest of the enemy's tanks

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A 6-PDR. SCORES A DIRECT HIT. This light German tank fell a victim during Rommel's retreat. The 6-pdr. shell has neatly taken the turret off the tank and has effectively dislodged the gun within from its seating

The Battles in Tunisia (III)

In the MEDJEZ and EL GUETTAR AREAS

Scenes from the Areas where the First Army and the Americans are Fighting

ON THE CENTRAL TUNISIAN FRONT WHERE THE AMERICANS HAVE BEEN ADVANCING. A dawn attack by bombers on German tanks and transport to the east of the town of El Guettar—*Drawing by W. G. Whitaker*

Whilst the Eighth Army was battering valiantly away at the Mareth Line, neither the First Army in Northern Tunisia nor the American columns around El Guettar were idle. At the latter point, Mitchell bombers of the U.S. Air Force were particularly active—and at a moment when Rommel would have welcomed a little quiet on this front! The scene depicted by our artist above shows how the Mitchells knocked out six out of thirty-odd tanks concentrated in a pass to the south-east of El Guettar: the Mitchells were followed up by Spitfire-escorted Bostons. One pilot returning from this sortie described whole areas as "hot with battle." Others reported strings of fires, and trucks lifted whole from the roadside and flung into the fields by blast. Amongst the things observed were the following—an encampment of Italian lorries, with 200 troops, heavily strafed; a concentration of fifty trucks, of which twenty fell to pieces or caught fire as cannon shells hit them; two bus-loads of troops shot up by the same squadron

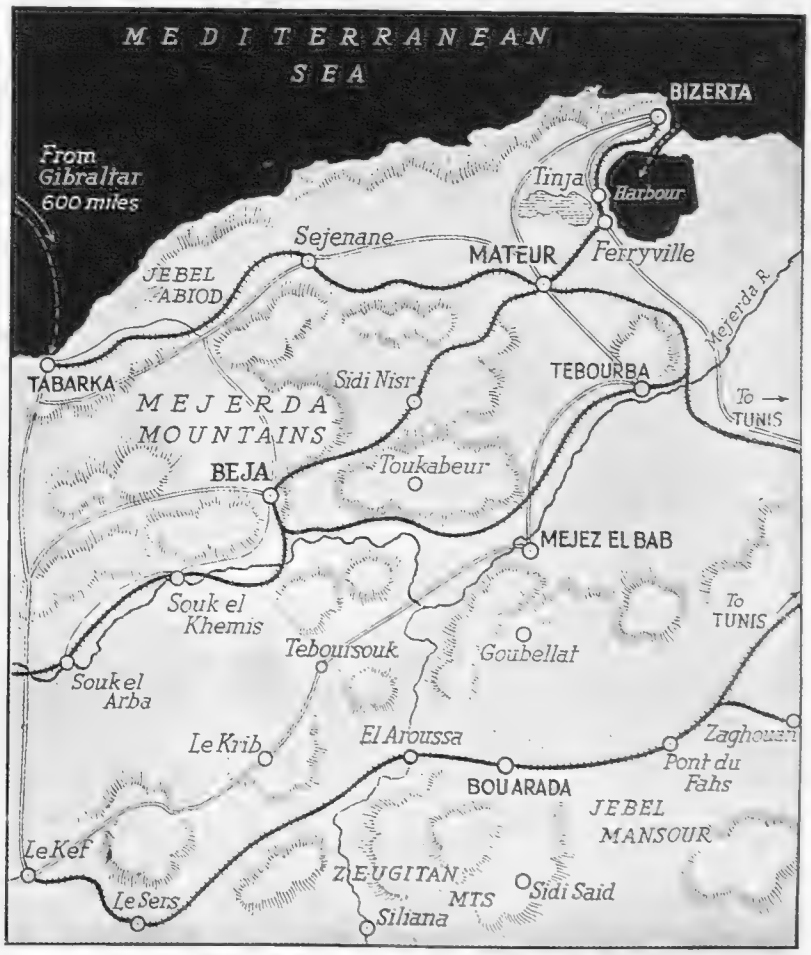
A SCENE WITHIN THE AREA OCCUPIED BY THE BRITISH FIRST ARMY IN NORTHERN TUNISIA. British Tommies assist a French farmer's wife by bringing up water and kindling wood. In many places, the farmsteads are not shelled by either side. This scene is in the Bou Arada district, where the cows are milked, the chickens fed and farm life goes on as usual, while overhead the battle may rage in the sky and the guns boom from the hill summits.—*Drawing by Edward Osmond*

In the northern area of Tunisia, where the First Army under General Anderson is pushing eastwards, farm life continues as before amongst the French colonists to a surprising extent. In many areas, it would almost appear as if there is a tacit understanding on both sides not to bomb or shell farmhouses behind either front. Life goes on quite cheerfully in some of the upland villages, and the presence of the British troops has brought a welcome windfall to many a French family, as their farm produce always enjoys a ready sale and the British Tommy is known for his gentle attitude to the civilian population of whatever country he might occupy! In the hills, the cows are milked and the chickens tended, while on the nearby stony crests desperate fighting may be going on. Our artist depicts such a scene in his drawing above, taken from photographic material which has reached us from the Bou Arada area, south of Mateur and Beja. Correspondents with the forces have visited these farmsteads and have witnessed our soldiers helping in the work of the farm. They fetch and carry for the farmer's wife and receive in return a deliciously cooked meal—in fact, nothing is too good for British officers or men who, in their turn, have done everything to spare these people the horrors of war

A BRITISH HORSED PATROL of the First Army which has achieved good results on the Central Tunisian front

On left—A famous county regiment has adopted the method of patrolling "no-man's-land" on horseback—with marked success. With the assistance of the horses, a large amount of enemy equipment has been brought in to our lines! Many men of the regiment clamour for an opportunity to go on patrol, which is not unusual—for many of them were connected with racing stables before enlisting!

On left—**LIFE ON THE EDGE OF THE NORTHERNMOST FIGHTING AREA IN TUNISIA:** This is a scene in the town of Medjez-el-Bab, which lies to the south-west of Tebourba, and behind which the Germans, a few weeks ago, were seriously endeavouring to extend their hold on the country into which the First Army are now advancing. The prominent Spanish-Moorish mosque-tower recalls the fact that Medjez-el-Bab is a town of Spanish origin. Freshly captured German prisoners are arriving under guard on the right; while on the left is a reconditioned British tank. Despite the war, life in the little town amongst the local French and Arab inhabitants goes on much the same as before!—*Drawing by W. G. Whitaker*



A PART OF THE AREA HELD BY THE BRITISH FIRST ARMY in Northern Tunisia. Heavy fighting took place in this region earlier in the campaign—notably at Mateur, Tebourba, Medjez-el-Bab, Bou Arada and around Beja. The American positions lie to the south of this area

FLAK AGAINST THE HEAVY BOMBERS

How it Affects the Tactics of Aircraft Flying at Average Heights and at Sub-Stratosphere Levels

THE enormous improvements and developments in the anti-aircraft batteries of to-day against invading bombers have so grown since the early days of the present war that those who controlled the air defences of Britain or Germany towards the latter part of the Great War of 1914–1918 would hardly recognise the existing barrages.

Although every effort was then made to increase the efficiency of the gun defence, those in command were evidently so much impressed by the success of the new night-fighter aircraft that they were inclined to think too little of the part which could be played by the A.A. batteries. In the old 1917–18 days, it was sufficient if the guns dispersed the oncoming enemy formations: the consequent break-up allowed the night fighter to get in amongst the raiders—and that was held to be of major importance!

Before this, only one direct hit on a Zeppelin raider over Britain had been claimed; the other shell-bursts appear to have been "near misses." The locating and sighting apparatus working with the guns was but newly devised and primitive. The invader had to be held by the search-light beam before the gunfire could become effective and the invading craft driven up to a height of 15,000 to 20,000 ft.

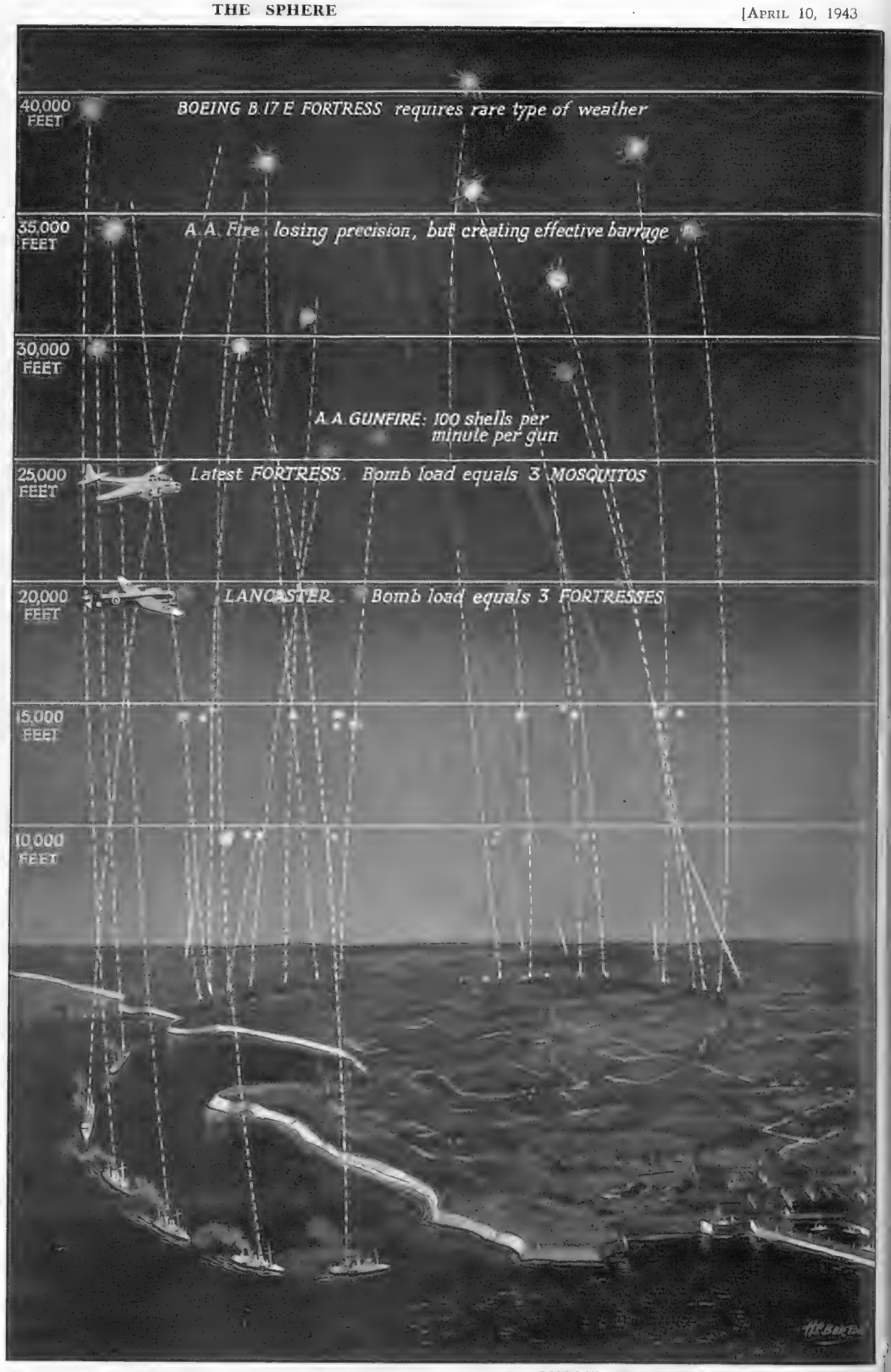
Now, with improved guns firing 100 shells per minute up to a height of 25,000 ft., the night scene has changed considerably—as all observers in Britain will testify, as well as our pilots over Berlin! At lower heights than 25,000 ft. the guns are naturally more effective, until we come to the very low heights at which tip-and-run surface raiders operate.

But even at extreme heights the barrage can be awkward for the raider. At more modest levels anti-aircraft fire can be very effective, although the first impression gained from the scattered gun-sites may not be very convincing. One correspondent writing from the Libyan desert has declared that the swirl and noise of the fighter craft had been more impressive, until he saw several enemy craft drop down out of the blue, owing to the bursting of the little white puffs above!

The more one realises the efficiency of the modern anti-aircraft barrage, each shell from which may have a destructive range of 100 ft. from its explosion point, the more courageous appears the work of the crews of the giant bombers. On most raids they must drop from comparatively safe heights to the hotter zones, where the flak bursts all around them. As one commentator has put it, "theirs is a grim business. For them, the simile is a rough house in a boiler-room as the huge craft are thrown round blindly among bursting shells and night fighters in the sky. . . The big four-engined machines have been successful in attack, but less successful in defence. They do hit the enemy with tremendous loads, but they also—on the average—suffer rather severely when doing it."

Fortunately, a number of our aircraft escape the very worst, although they often come back looking like colanders. But they do come back! In view of this present-day efficacy of flak, the necessity for giving the big bomber every possible ounce of speed seems to become increasingly important. These stately craft, with 8,000 pounders hanging in their bomb-racks, cannot be any too handy to manœuvre in "avoiding action."

One interesting change which modern scientific methods have brought about should be noted. It is now usually on dirty nights, with low visibility, that the guns are noisiest during defence. This is due to the unseen secret devices for combating the invaders.



BARRAGE FIRE BY THE ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTERIES OF TO-DAY. How it operates from 10,000 ft. up to the stratosphere level at which the Flying Fortress can, under good weather conditions, continue to operate—*Drawing by H. P. Burton*

Below—**MORE THAN FOUR MILES HIGH! A Flying Fortress of the U.S. Army's Eighth Air Force heads towards a target in North-West Germany by daylight. Note the four separate and distinct condensation trails left in its wake as it hurtles through the rarefied air**

THE MEN WHO BOMB BERLIN

Before they Set Out, and after their Return

BEFORE THE START: Bomber crews check up on the ration bags and kit. Included in the eatables is that great rarity, the orange!

READY TO TAKE OFF: Members of bomber crews outside the huts awaiting transport to their aircraft

AFTER THE RAID. An air crew, on their safe return, board a lorry to take them back to the Intelligence Office for interrogation

BREAKFAST BACK AT THE BASE. Pilots and air crews just returned from a big raid at breakfast in the Mess

CHECKING IN FROM A BIG RAID ON BERLIN. This squadron consists of Australians, Canadians, Rhodesians, New Zealanders, as well as British airmen. It operates Lancaster bombers

AMERICAN FLYING FORTRESS CREWS, back from a daylight raid over Germany, tell the story of the part they played. The Interrogation Officer—the only man without a leather jacket—sits with his back to the camera and sorts out all the various pieces of information given to him by the crew members

A W.A.A.F. SECTION OFFICER INTERROGATES AN AIR CREW JUST BACK FROM BERLIN. Quite a number of these highly-trained women are now acting as Intelligence Officers at Bomber Stations throughout England

The NAVY'S LIGHT COASTAL FORCES

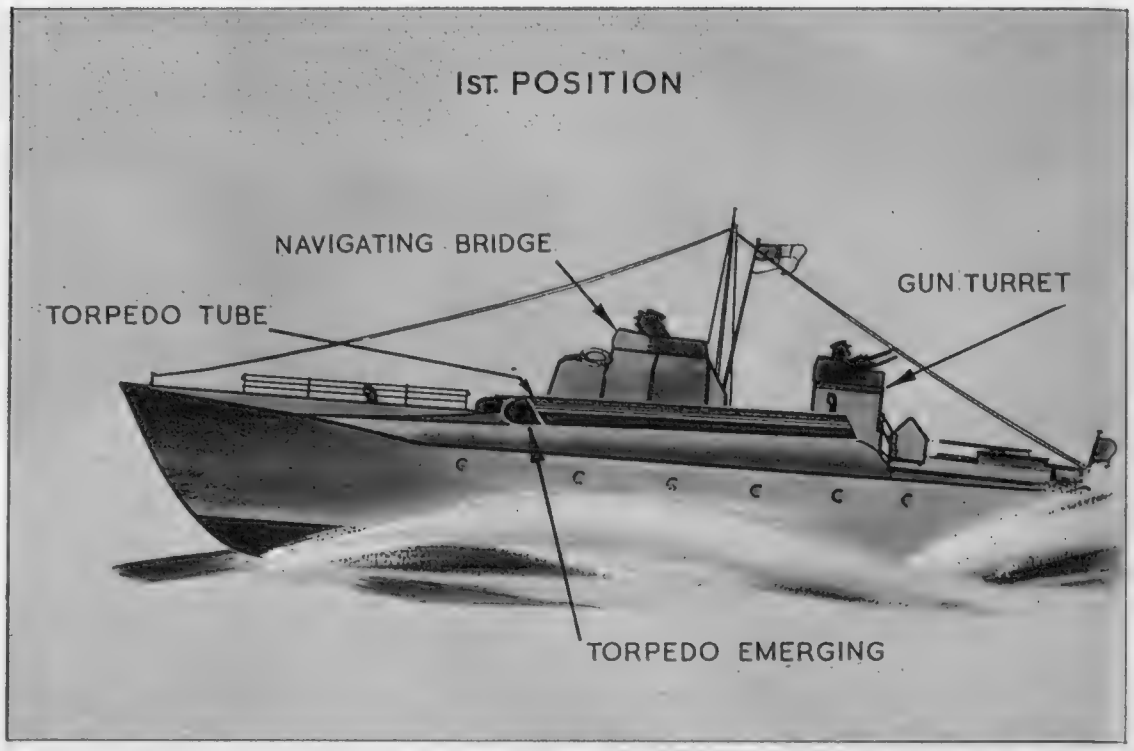
Which Fight Many Times Faster than the Lumbering Ships of the Days of Nelson

By A. J. McWHINNIE

THE "Light Coastal Forces" season is at its height. Night after night, British motor torpedo boats, motor gunboats, "M.L.s," and other small, fast, motor warships race across to enemy waters to intercept and attack any German hug-the-coast shipping they can find.

When war began, Britain had only twenty-five motor torpedo boats in the Navy. To-day, these vastly improved, more powerful, fighting craft, able to race into battle at nearly a mile a minute, are based at strategic points all round Britain's coast-line. "No captain," said Nelson, "can do very wrong if he places his ship alongside that of an enemy." He said that in the days when naval battles were fought at a speed of 5 knots. To-day, 138 years later, young daredevils of the sea are responding to that formula off Hitler's doorstep at great speed. The only difference in the formula is that the light coastal forces fighters race instead of place their ships alongside the enemy.

It is a well-understood fighting principle that a good naval man thinks at the speed of his ship. If his decisions lag a fraction behind the revolutions

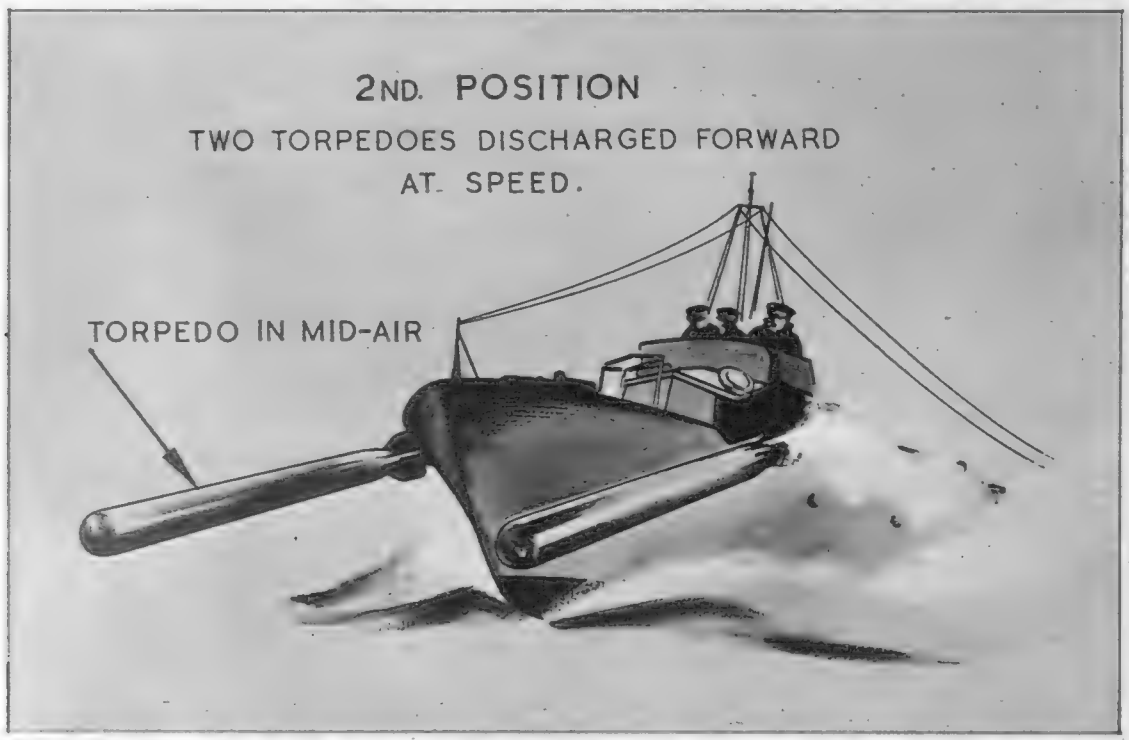


HOW ONE OF THE FAST M.T.B.s LAUNCHES ITS TORPEDOES. The first position—the torpedoes emerge from their tubes while the craft is speeding towards the target. Tubes are fixed to each side of the vessel

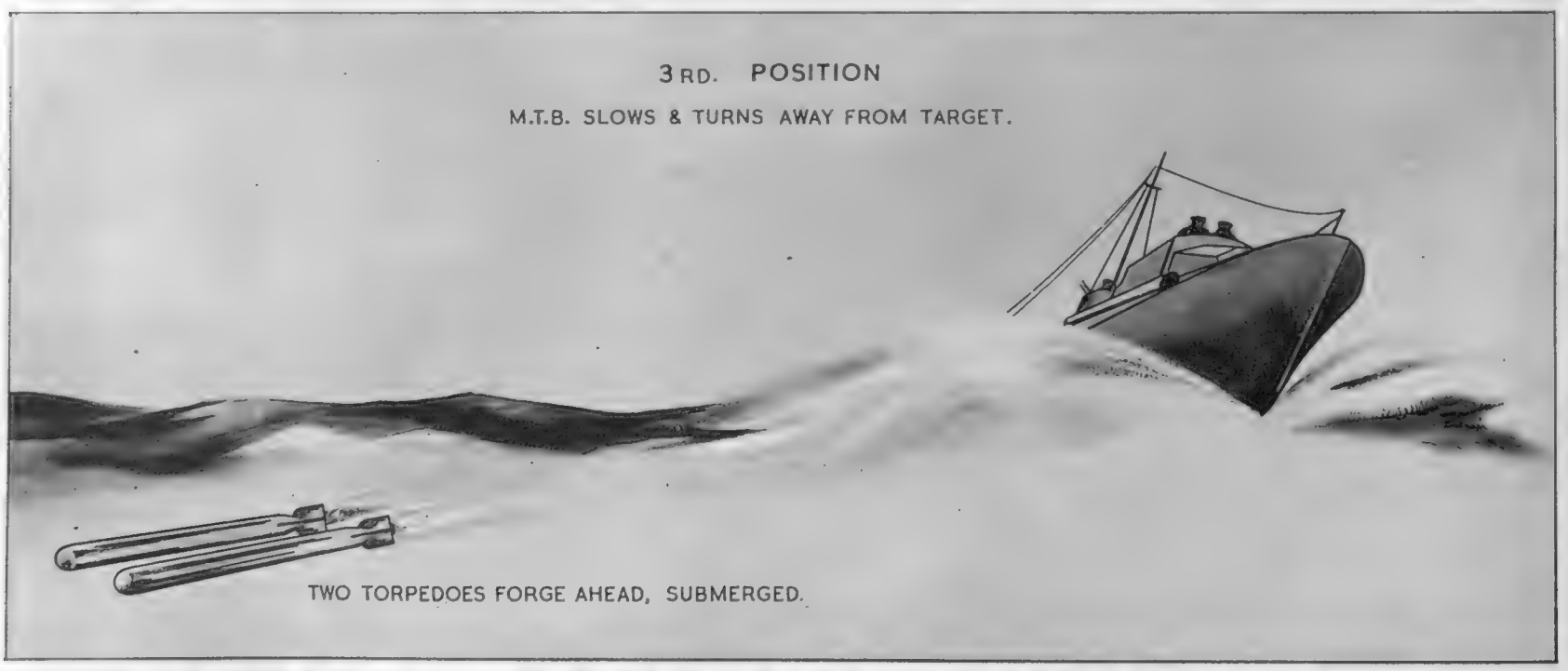
of his engines, then the penalty may mean defeat or death. Young men of light coastal forces have to think at a mile a minute as they follow split-second decisions and thunder and roar into action.

These are the known details and differences between our light coastal forces and the Schnellboote, as the Germans call their motor torpedo boats. We call the German craft "E-boats"—"E" merely standing for enemy. The E-boats are bigger than many of our M.T.B.s—105 ft. and 93 ft. long against the 60 or 72-ft. lengths of our boats. But our craft have higher speeds; early types of M.T.B.s carried two 18-in. torpedoes, which were slipped into the water behind the boats. To-day, the latest craft carry two 21-in. torpedo tubes firing forward. Our motor gunboats are similar craft to the M.T.B.s, but they fight with guns and without the extra weight of torpedoes. And just in case U-boats should try again using the narrow waters separating Britain from her enemies, many of these little warships carry depth-charges.

There are reasons for believing that during the past few months new types of motor gunboats, bigger and with greater endurance, have been added to the flotillas of the midget Navy. The powerful aero engines of these mosquito raiders are almost silent at slow speeds. The boats creep towards the German coastal convoys as a cat slithers along, every muscle poised, before springing at a bird. Bigger warships would not be so effective for these point-blank battles. They would be spotted earlier. The Germans would have more warning.



THE SECOND POSITION—The torpedoes are shot from the twin tubes at a much greater speed than that of the M.T.B. itself. What follows once the deadly missiles have been launched is indicated in the drawing below



THE THIRD POSITION—The two torpedoes, after discharge, proceed at high speed while the M.T.B. now turns away—*Drawings by B. C. Wood*

Not all the high-speed craft operated by the Royal Navy in home waters carry torpedoes. The Motor Torpedo Boat, however, is equipped with two tubes with which to attack enemy sea-borne craft. These are placed nearly amidships, one to starboard and one to port. When making an attack, the M.T.B. forges ahead straight for the target, or a point or two ahead of it. At the right moment the torpedoes are released simultaneously at a speed in excess of the vessel itself, fast though the latter may be. For a moment or two, all three go forward together; but a second or two later the torpedoes have plunged into the water and are racing at high speed ahead. When they are clear of the M.T.B. the vessel turns away, either to break off the action or to take up a new position in the fight.

THE DOUBLE PUNCH PACKED BY THE NAVY'S "LIGHT-WEIGHTS": A remarkable photograph of two torpedoes being discharged by an M.T.B. whilst travelling at top speed in the Channel. These vessels cost over £22,000 apiece and have a displacement of about 30 tons

The small craft are hardly discernible in the darkness until they are actually attacking their quarry. Then, at the right second, the captain on his tiny bridge gives his ship full throttle and dashes into the fight.

The confusion these light coastal forces have caused the enemy has been seen from Admiralty communiqués describing how, in a general mix-up, German ships have been firing at each other. And the British craft which started it all have been lying off watching the fun from a distance.

Such is the control the motor gunboats, the M.T.B.s and the high-speed M.L.s are keeping in narrow waters. Once the E-boats had their alley down the East Coast. And E-boat alley was dangerous to all our coastal convoys. The position has been reversed. Only occasionally is there news from Berlin of E-boat activity.

But barely a week passes without news of Britain's "light coastal forces." Among the recent communiqués was the news that they have been operating even against enemy ships in a Norwegian fiord.

A POWER-OPERATED GUN TURRET which, at will, can be used against aircraft or surface craft

A GUN POSITION ON BOARD AN M.L., which often works with the Royal Navy in the protection of our merchantmen convoys

ANOTHER ASPECT OF THE WORK OF THE NAVY'S SMALL CRAFT IN THE CHANNEL. The rescue of five airmen from their rubber dinghy off a sandbank. A searchlight from the cliffs co-operated in the task—*Drawing by Wm. McDowell*

Flotillas of rescue motor-launches, it was recently revealed, have been co-operating for many months with the R.A.F. A little while ago the crew of a Whitley bomber were brought off a Channel sandbank by one of these small craft, despite a high sea and despite a night "blacker than a Commando's face." "We got the call at midnight," said the skipper. "The tides were running out and there was a danger of us being aground before we reached the men. We bucketed around for quite a while without any luck. Then a searchlight on the cliffs opened up, and we saw in its beams the dinghy and its tired men. We got all five of them on board, including an injured man who weighed just over 17 stone, by means of a 'scrambling net' swung out from a jib on our deck. When we got back we found we had been operating over a minefield!" The launches engaged on these tasks can batter their way through almost any weather—although they are far from comfortable craft in such conditions: their range of more than 200 miles means that they can stretch far out into the Atlantic or the North Sea if necessary. They carry a crew of fifteen and usually carry out their patrols in pairs

AN AXIS IDEA FOR THE REINFORCEMENT OF ROMMEL IN TUNISIA: German double-hulled barges, driven by aircraft propellers, being escorted in convoy by Italian coastal motor-boats across the Mediterranean. A number of these have been regularly attacked by American Flying Fortresses during recent weeks whilst making for Bizerta and other Tunisian ports—*Drawing by Wm. McDowell*

AN OLD IDEA REVIVED

For the Reinforcement of the Axis in North Africa

With Two Other German Items in Connection with the Air and Sea Wars

Whilst General Montgomery was preparing for his great and successful assault on Rommel, various communiqués indicated a new idea which the Axis were applying for the reinforcement and supply of their armies in Tunisia. This took the shape of specially-constructed barges, of the type illustrated in the drawing above, which were taken in convoy across the Mediterranean from Italian ports to Bizerta.

These barges are of the twin-hull construction, and each is about 80 ft. long. They are of very shallow draught and thus more or less immune from torpedo attack. They are driven by aircraft motors and propellers mounted on the deck. Escorted by Italian coastal motor-boats, they had been making the journey in groups of a half-a-dozen; and they have provided the U.S. Flying Fortresses with good targets!

The idea of propelling surface craft by air-screws is not a new one. Vessels on this principle were developed and used, both in this country and elsewhere, more than twenty years ago. In Russia there is a ferry system in which vessels of this type—of large size—are employed.

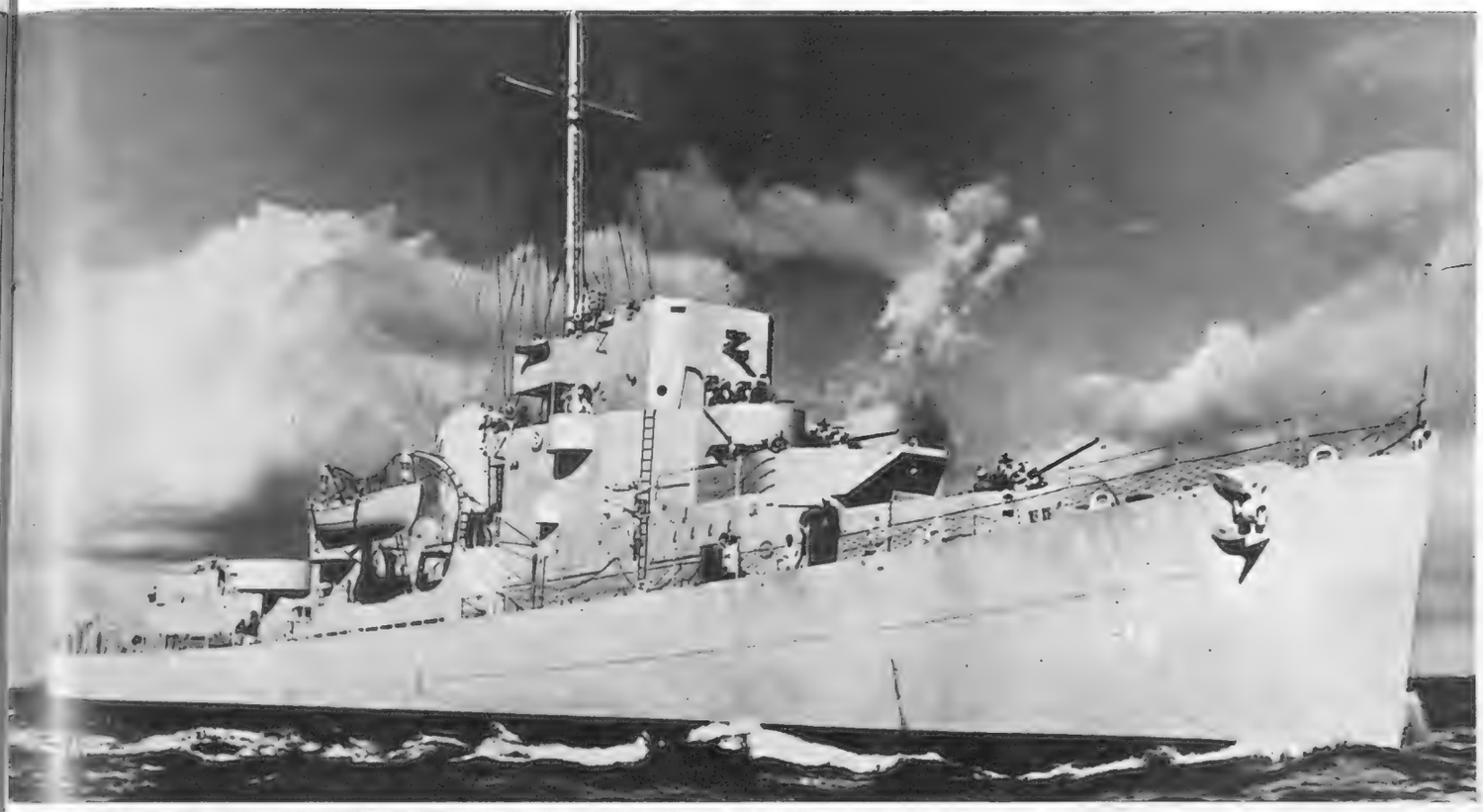
Such craft are not economical to operate, but they possess certain advantages. No great speed can be attained, but they are eminently suitable for very shallow waters, and also in water which abounds in weeds, as there is no underwater propeller to be fouled. The airscrew, which is naturally of large diameter, is usually encased in a protective framework.

The escort vessel to the right of the picture above is an Italian coastal motor-boat or M.A.S. (Motoscafi Anti-Sommergibili), of which type the Italian Navy has many, and with which much propaganda work was done before the outbreak of the present war. They are small vessels of about 50 ft. in length and from 13½ to 14 tons displacement: they carry two small torpedoes which are dropped from clips and *not* fired from tubes. Their speed is reported to be 40 knots, derived from 1,500-h.p. motors.

A GERMAN ARTIST'S CONCEPTION of a naval engagement between light coastal forces near the British coast on the night of February 27 (*see* note at right)

On left—Without comment we offer this highly-coloured descriptive gem, written by a German and published recently in a German newspaper—"In the night of February 27, a unit of German speedboats attacked a strongly protected enemy convoy in the immediate vicinity of the British coast. Two steamships and one tanker totalling 6,500 B.R.T., as well as two escort ships, were sunk. Furthermore, the armed British supply ship 7381 was torpedoed. The ship did not sink at once, so that the German speedboat came alongside, overwhelmed the British crew and took eleven prisoners"

THIS IS THE GERMAN "FLYING SHOE." The Blohm and Voss 138 Flying Boat has a curious shape, resembling a slipper. It is used by the enemy for long-range reconnaissance flights to spot British convoys at sea. The "Flying Shoe" is powered with three 600-h.p. motors which give it a top speed of 170 m.p.h. and a normal cruising speed of about 146 m.p.h. The gun turret seen just above the nose in this picture is retractable: there are two other gun positions aft of the wing, arranged so as to give fields of fire above and below the tail plane. Should it be found desirable, the "Flying Shoe" can also carry a bomb load, although this is not considerable. Its maximum range is just short of 1,500 miles



HERE IS ONE OF THE NEW DESTROYER ESCORTS OF THE U.S. NAVY. The D.E.13 knifing her way through the water in a trial run. This is a starboard quarter view of the new-type vessel which combines sturdiness with endurance and heavy armament

TWO "ESCORT TYPE" DESTROYERS

Now Being Used in the American and British Navies for Convoy Protection Duties

The two pictures reproduced here, of escort-type destroyers, provide a good contrast in present-day naval vessels. The D.E.13, shown above, is amongst the U.S. Navy's newest: she was built with the definite object of protecting the convoys on the sea lanes of the Atlantic and, for this purpose, she has been armed with a heavy armament. In addition, her superstructure resembles that of a cruiser rather than a destroyer! The *Wallace*, on the other hand, was launched in October 1918: she is of 1916 design, but was re-armed specially for escort duties in 1938-1939. She displaces 1,250 tons and has a speed of 28 knots.

A VIEW FROM THE AIR OF THE BRITISH "ESCORT TYPE" DESTROYER, H.M.S. "WALLACE." This vessel was built a good number of years ago, but she is still finding plenty to do in her wartime job of protecting the merchant convoys. She displaces 1,250 tons

HOW THE WAR IS REPORTED

The Work of the Accredited War Correspondents at the Various Battlefronts. Described by CHARLES GRAVES.

ON the walls of Fleet Street's Press Club—that interesting rendezvous of the ace reporters, editors and sub-editors of London and the Empire—hang a number of coloured cartoons of famous war correspondents of the past. And magnificent old busters they must have been.

War correspondents probably reached their prime in the days of the Balkan wars. When there was not a war for them to cover, they really had nothing to do. In the 1914-18 war there were half a dozen official war correspondents in France who lived in a château, drove around in limousines and, with the exception of Sir Philip Gibbs, never saw a shot fired in anger except by mistake. They were all featured writers.

When the B.E.F. went to France in 1939, things were different up to a point. That is to say, that instead of half a dozen war correspondents, there were scores of staff reporters in Army uniform—ex-sports writers, crime reporters, and the like. Even then, however, those attached to the B.E.F. were not allowed anywhere nearer than the "line of recoil"; whereas war correspondents attached to the French armies were allowed right up in the line of contact. And when the French and Belgians cracked and the evacuation to Dunkirk was threatened, the war correspondents were all hastily shipped back to England. There was not a single war reporter nearer Dunkirk than Dover or Southend.

When operations began in the Middle East, a very different state of affairs occurred. And in a way I may have had something to do with it. Colonel Philip Astley, who has been in charge of the war reporters in the Middle East throughout this war, dined with me in London just after my second visit to the Army in France. This was the night before he was flying to Arras to learn the existing routine of conducting, looking after, and generally handling war reporters before going out to Egypt himself. He asked me what my impressions had been at the receiving end. I told him: my only real complaint being that war reporters were not allowed near enough to the front line.

"Do you think they would like to?" Colonel Astley asked doubtfully.

"Most of them would like to," I replied, "and anyway, it would be an interesting experiment."

"Well, I'll see what I can do," were his parting words.

One reason for my suggesting this to him was that the war reporters in France during 1939 and 1940 were by no means popular with the troops (once at Lens I heard them hissing a staff car marked "Press"), partly because they were known not to see any action, and also because some of them described the troops in a rather *Peg's Paper* manner—"Tough troops with glinting eyes," or "Handsome, sun-burnt sergeants," and so on.

Out in the Middle East, Colonel Astley allowed the war reporters right up in the front line. Alexander Clifford and Alan Moorehead were on one occasion right out in front of the whole pursuing army. They lived hard, and many have been killed and wounded. The actual statistics to date are that, of British, Empire and American correspondents engaged in this war, eighteen have been killed, four are missing, and several have been wounded or injured. Some have been captured. Particularly in the Middle East, war reporters have been in the thick of the fighting and have been shot up on land, at sea and in the air.

It is understandable that the attitude of the Services towards war reporters underwent a change when one of them shot down an attacking enemy aircraft when the tail gunner of the bomber in which he was flying was killed beside him. (He received a mention in despatches.)

It is true, though, that the War Office has not been able to follow the example of the German Army with its front-line reporters. Conscription having been in force for so long in Germany, every reporter has served his time in the Army, and so he is a belligerent writer, not a writer dressed in uniform and not even wearing a Sam Browne belt.

In the air, the war reporters have been allowed to go on various operational flights, notably in Sunderlands over the Bay of Biscay, and Lancasters or Halifaxes over Berlin. Several have lost their lives or have been posted as missing as a result of this. War reporters have also been allowed to go to sea in anything from a destroyer to a battleship or aircraft-carrier; and once again, several have lost their lives. Others have survived torpedoing, dive-bombing and other unpleasant experiences.

Quite a number of war reporters have been to Malta. But perhaps the best show of all ever put up by any of them was that of A. B. Austin, the *Daily Herald* war reporter, who was with the Commandos at Dieppe and was busy carrying messages and ammunition under fire. Austin is the type of war reporter whom the Army likes.

War reporters have this disadvantage—that they have no rank, although by international agreement they are entitled to be treated and paid as captains when captured.

But let us take a typical war reporter's experiences in the past three years. Ronald Monson, with whose name most people are now familiar, was out in France in 1939 and 1940, went out to the Middle East in October 1940, just in time to accompany Wavell's advance; when Wavell's Army turned back, Monson went to Greece, and weathered blizzards and 14 ft. of snowdrift to cross the Kattara Pass. His next assignment was Crete. From there he went to Alexandria. Next he was sent to Iraq for the quelling of the rebels. Then the Syrian campaign began, and Monson went up with the troops until they finally linked with the Russian forces. Later on he was in Tobruk, arriving by sea. From here he went to Burma to cover this campaign, but was back in time to watch the triumphant entry of our troops into Tripoli. He must have risked his life on several dozen occasions during this period. What war correspondent of a previous generation could possibly have had experiences on a par with this?

That is one side of the picture—with war reporters being shelled, bombed and torpedoed in their civilian capacity. On the other side of the picture you have all those reporters who have joined the Services in some military capacity or another. Many of them have been utilised by the Air Ministry as Public Relations Officers and Interrogation Officers. In fact, I cannot recall having met any P.R.O. on any Fighter Command, Bomber Command or Coastal Command station who had not been a newspaper man in peacetime. Many of them in the past few months have taken courses in air gunnery, and have taken part in a number of operational sorties. Indeed, I am told that unless a P.R.O. has qualified as an air gunner, he will not be allowed to go back with the R.A.F. when we invade the Continent.

In addition to these P.R.O.s from Fleet Street, there are numbers of Fleet Street reporters who joined the R.A.F. as ordinary air crew. At least one has got the D.S.O., and several have received the D.F.C. and D.F.M. Numbers of reporters and sub-editors have joined the Royal Navy and, in some instances, have refused P.R.O. jobs in order to be operational in destroyers, corvettes and motor torpedo-boats. Numbers of newspaper men, of course, joined the Army, and it is not unusual to find the younger ones among them anxious to remain in the Army, even when the war is over, as ordinary infantry officers—not P.R.O.s. The Army, in fact, is less inclined than the Royal Air Force to detail ex-reporters as conducting officers. In France, at any rate, the conducting officers who took us war reporters around were mostly from the Cavalry; and they treated their squads of four or five newspaper men rather like their polo ponies, being genuinely anxious that their protégés should do better than the others.

P.S.—Every week in a Fleet Street "trade journal" there is a feature devoted entirely to newspaper men in the Services. This alone goes to show that reporters and sub-editors have come forward with as much patriotism as any other class in the war.

ACCREDITED WAR CORRESPONDENTS, representing famous newspapers and Newspaper Services from all over the world, are attached to the Eighth and other Armies. They are usually conducted around the battlefield by British officers. *Above*—**ALEXANDER CLIFFORD (of the "Daily Mail") and ALAN MOOREHEAD (of the "Daily Express") are seen preparing to move off after spending a night in the Libyan Desert in June 1942.** *On the right*—**A group of Correspondents are talking to an Italian flying officer who had just been shot down over the desert**

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this publication should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export

WAR NEWS-ITEMS in PICTURES

HOW AMERICAN EQUIPMENT IS TRANSPORTED BY AIR : Airborne Engineers is the latest development in the U.S. Army : numbers of these men are now being trained in the transportation of their equipment by aeroplane. Here a number of them, accompanied by a motor-driven tractor, are being loaded on to a C47 transport plane as the Engineers set out to repair a supposedly-bombed airfield. This plane is capable of carrying a heavy cargo : it has a large loading door and a reinforced floor : alternately, it can accommodate twenty-eight airborne or parachute troops, complete with military equipment

A "JEEP" EMERGES FROM ITS AIRBORNE GLIDER : The whole nose of the glider has been constructed to lift up bodily, so that its heavy load can be disgorged in a minimum amount of time. The equipment used by the U.S. airborne Engineers is all miniature in size so that it can be conveyed in transport or glider. Part of the work of the Engineers in the field will be the job of repairing bomb-damaged airfields and the erection of landing strips. Note the tiny ramps for the unloading of wheeled vehicles

THE "CHIPCHASE LIFE CRAFT" which holds over twenty-four seamen : As announced recently in Parliament, the percentage of Merchant Navy men lost at sea is very small—only 2½ per cent. of the total number shipwrecked. This is due in large part to the efficiency of our lifeboats and rafts, which are of the highest quality and contain the essentials for life-saving at sea. This picture was taken during a test of the "Chipchase Life Craft" : it is a reversible vessel which holds over twenty-four men : it is equipped with oars, sails and anti-frost clothing, and it carries food and water in special containers. The craft is unsinkable, has an automatic light which flashes at night, and is self-launching

BRITISH MILITARY POLICE CONTROL TRAFFIC TO RUSSIA OVER THE PERSIAN MOUNTAINS : A Convoy of Army vehicles bound for the Soviet coming down the Pa'yi'taq Pass : One of the many duties of the Corps of Military Police in Persia is the control of traffic on the mountain roads over which supplies go to Russia. Amongst the more important of these is the road over the Pa'yi'taq Pass : in winter it is frequently blocked by snow, but men of the Royal Engineers (working with the Military Police) keep it open by means of snow ploughs. For recreation the men of the C.M.P. and R.E. go hunting for deer and wild pig in the mountains !

GIRLS MAKE LIFESAVERS FOR THE R.A.F. Hanging up inflated "Mae Wests" in the Inspection Department

GIRLS AT WORK ON THE SMALL PARTS (INFLATORS, ETC.) OF RUBBER DINGHIES. A complete craft is seen in the background. These dinghies and "Mae Wests" (life-saving jackets) have been the means of saving thousands of lives at sea when airmen have been forced down into "the drink." Large numbers of girls are now employed in making these important articles of R.A.F. equipment

The World of Books—By Vernon Fane

RUSSIA—THE MAIN THEME OF THREE BOOKS

J. A. T. Lloyd's Biography of a Writer; A Collection of Russian Short Stories; The Last Phase of the Romanov's Life; Personal Reminiscences of the Countess of Listowel; A Newfoundland Tragedy; A French General's Military Survey

BY a coincidence which, as far as I know, owes nothing to premeditation, three of the most interesting books I have read during the past week have had Russian subjects. Their Russian-ness, however, has been their only common factor, since between them they covered a period of 160 years, and in theme, everything from a Tsarist Court to a Red Army encampment.

First of all, a biography of **IVAN TURGENEV** (Robert Hale. 12s. 6d.), by Mr. J. A. T. Lloyd. It was said of this great writer, who lived from 1818 to 1883, that "to dine with Turgenev is to dine with Europe"; yet he was, and still remains to all his readers, essentially a Russian man of letters. Turgenev was born "into a nest of nobles," and had a widely cosmopolitan upbringing. He knew Europe, and particularly France and Germany, well. His friendships were international, yet, when he died in Paris, it was to his own Russia that his body was taken for burial.

Mr. Lloyd's biography is, as an intelligent biography of a writer should be, both an account of his life and a critical assessment of his work. Turgenev was attacked, in his own time, for being so imbued with the thoughts and manners of Western Europe that he had lost touch with his own country, though, as his biographer attempts to show, it was to those interpretations of Russian life that he wrote while in France that his reputation owes most of its glory.

"First and last, Turgenev is preoccupied with reality; he knew, none better, that the deep, dark undercurrents of reality belong more naturally to the hut than to the palace, and that the moujik's izba is by no means a negligible seismometer for the cruel life-pressure of the whole world movement."

He knew, too, from personal experience of a more trivial kind, how temperamental and really childish the reactions of his great contemporaries could be: how Dostoevsky paced up and down outside Turgenev's lodgings in a fury because he, quite mistakenly, imagined that someone there had laughed at him, and how the author of *War and Peace* could provoke him to the point where he would cry: "Be silent, Tolstoy, or I will throw my fork at you!"

RUSSIAN SHORT STORIES (Faber and Faber. 8s. 6d.) includes one of the most enchanting of Turgenev stories, *A Quiet Backwater*, which has been to me, since first I learned to spell out s-a-m-o-v-a-r, a complete and unforgettable picture of life in the old Russian provinces. Its tragedy and its irony, as well as the pictorial quality of its beauty, is memorable and, to thousands of us who have read it, it is Russia.

Twenty writers are represented in this volume, from Pushkin's inimitable work to the more staccato drama of present-day technique. There is Gogol's *The Overcoat* and Tolstoy's horrible and compelling *Death of Ivan Ilych*. There is Tchekov's *My Life*, which needs, perhaps less than any story in the collection, the page-by-page reminder of the author's name.

Only the very recent stories were unfamiliar to me, and I was grateful for the balance that those gave, although, modern as they are, they still hold echoes of an earlier habit of thought. The style has changed, abruptly and violently, but the imprint remains.

Mr. R. J. Minney and Mr. Osbert Sitwell have written a play which deals with the last phase of the Tsar Nicholas's reign, up till his abdication in March 1917. I would be doubtful about its dramatic possibilities, and even to read it strikes one that this reconstruction of fateful days is almost too well-mannered.

GENTLE CÆSAR (Macmillan. 6s.) is the Romanov's life seen almost entirely from the angle of the hearth, which, instead of giving it the originality of an Orson Welles film, gives it a rather specious melodramatic quality. It is difficult, and perhaps not advisable, to try to reproduce the intimacies of speech of a more obscure family than this, for everything of truth and dignity must vanish when one character, crowned or uncrowned, says to another, "But, Sunshine darling, you know I shall fight for you and our little baby to the end."

Dignity and drama vanish, and *East Lynne* walks right in at the door. It is an undecided piece of work, for all the authors' evident sense of pity.

The Countess of Listowel has written her reminiscences. **THIS I HAVE SEEN** (Faber. 12s. 6d.) begins: "My father was a diplomat, and I grew up in a well-to-do Hungarian home"; and then goes on to describe how, in Rome at the age of two, a Prussian governess gave the young Judith de Márffy-Mantuano a lesson in Prussian brutality.

So, like many another good Hungarian aristocrat, Lady Listowel inherited a dislike of Prussians and a love for England. Lady Listowel attended the London School of Economics, where she came into contact with a number of advanced thinkers on the Left. She also became a journalist, her father remarking that she was degrading herself and would be debarred from all decent drawing-rooms.

An American agent, recognising the immense possibilities of the combination of an old title and a journalist among the women's clubs, booked her for a lecture tour. Subsequently, she travelled Europe a good deal, seeing Nazis in Germany, Bolshevists in Russia, Fascists in Rome, politicians and their mistresses in Paris, and lots of her own friends in Hungary.

She was among that unspecified number of people who were positively the last to leave Paris on May 16, 1940. In December of the same year she went lecturing again to America. All this has its own personal interest and is tinged with the author's prescience, charm and sense of opportunity. Only when she steps aside to comment does the author reveal the strange inconsistencies of her mind.

"In the past," she says, "I often felt resentful of Britain, particularly on account of her caste system. It annoyed me to see working-class men take pride in the presence of a titled person." Yet on her return to England in July 1941, when she found a new spirit in the country, to the analysis of which she devotes a chapter, we find that she is immensely impressed by the conscription of women into factories. The ladies whose factory work impressed her sufficiently to mention them by name include three Honourables and the sister of a Duke. The fact that at no time have women been conscripted for industry seems to have eluded Lady Listowel.

Similarly, in advancing a well-known feminist argument about equal compensation, she belabours the present Prime Minister with the wrong end of the stick, and winds up by saying, "Were it not so tragic that Mr. Churchill should, at this juncture, hold to his antediluvian views about women, one would be inclined to ribaldry."

On the subject of industrial relations, Lady Listowel is even more explicit. "The bitter antagonism between the Right and the Left was solved by the wisdom of one British statesman—Stanley Baldwin. . . . The results of his efforts were noticeable at the time of the General Strike."

It would be difficult to beat that; but still, as I have said, the lady is full of charm.

By all counts the oddest book of the week is Miss Margaret Duley's **HIGHWAY TO VALOUR** (Methuen. 8s. 6d.). It concerns a girl called Mageila Michelet, a seventh child of a seventh child, who has the power of healing in her hands. Mageila sees her mother, father and her four sisters drowned before her eyes in the tidal wave that followed an earthquake in Newfoundland in 1929.

The shock stuns an already sensitive, introvert nature and she is long in recovering; does not recover, in fact, until, in a voyage in one of her grandfather's ships, she meets a man who reminds her of her father, and falls in love with him. Their love-affair is consistently unhappy. One cannot deny the sincerity of the author's expression, but her writing is curiously stylised, and it is only in flashes that her conviction is communicated to the reader. The background of Newfoundland scenes is excellent; almost, in the instance of the whale factory, too realistic; and there is a real feeling for the sights and sounds of the country itself; but I found this an uncomfortable book and possibly a little too rarefied.

A worthy contribution to the strengthening of good relations between Frenchmen and Englishmen has been made by General Eon, whose **THE BATTLE OF FLANDERS** (Hachette. 2s.) has just been published.

The General has dedicated his survey to Lord Gort, who "incorporated in his splendid team the 3ème Corps d'Armée and the Corps de Cavalerie Français of the French 1st Army."

This is a soldier's book, since it deals with the military operations of May 1940, and the lessons to be learned from them. But it is written with such clarity that it should have an even wider reception. The text is available either in French or in English.

THE ROBERT SOUTHEY CENTENARY. The beautiful view of part of the Lake District enjoyed by the poet from the window of his study at Greta Hall, Keswick, where he lived from 1803 until his death in 1843

Robert Southey—poet, historian and biographer—was born at Bristol in August 1774: but his life is mainly associated with the English Lake District, for in 1803 (when he decided to settle down to literature in earnest) he took up residence at Greta Hall, Keswick, and there he remained till his death on March 21, 1843. He was buried at nearby Crosthwaite Church. On the left of this fine picture is a stretch of the northern end of Derwentwater; near the centre is the bridge over the River Greta. Keswick is planning to commemorate the centenary of his death with four days' celebration in August next: it is then hoped to reconstruct Southey's study (the windows of which looked out on to this grand Lakeland view) in the form in which the poet knew it—or as nearly as possible

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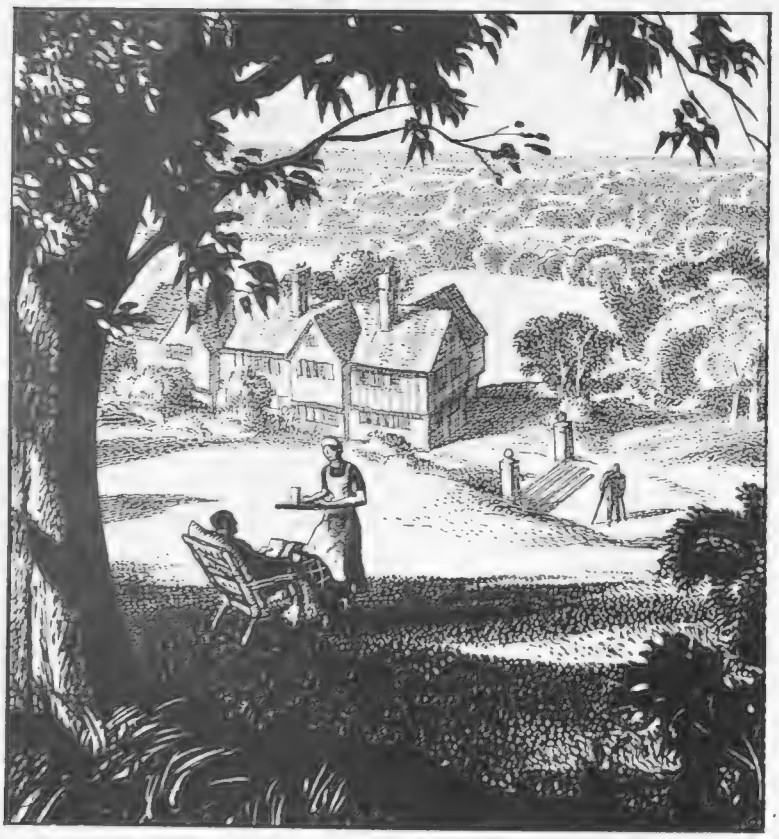

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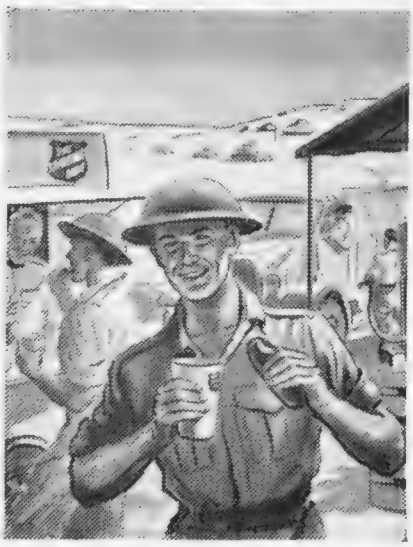

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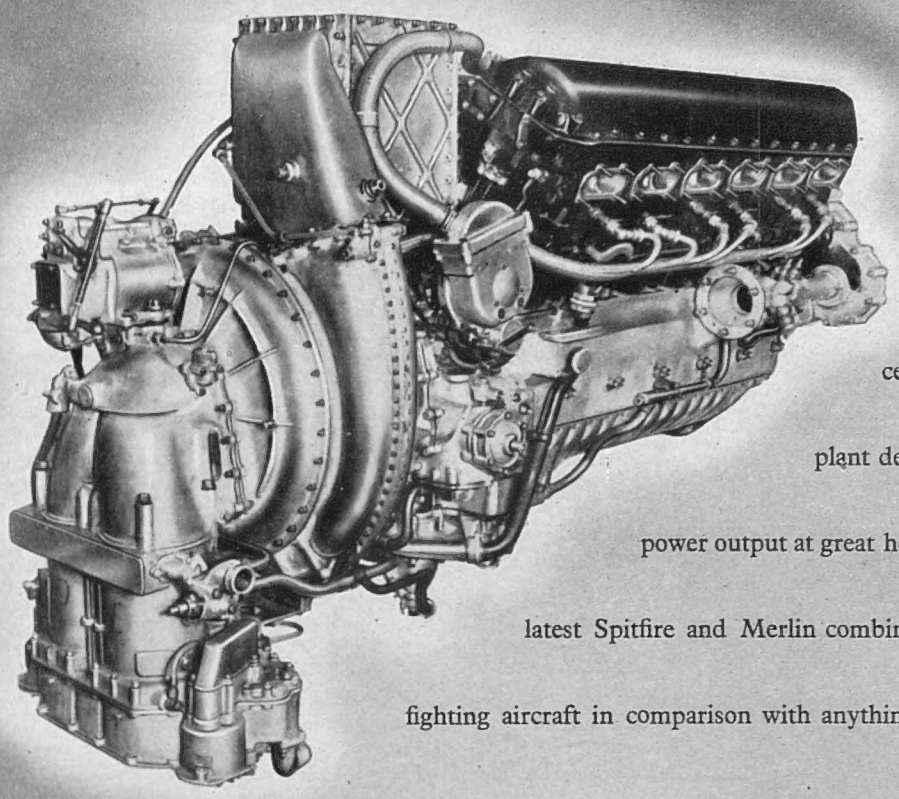

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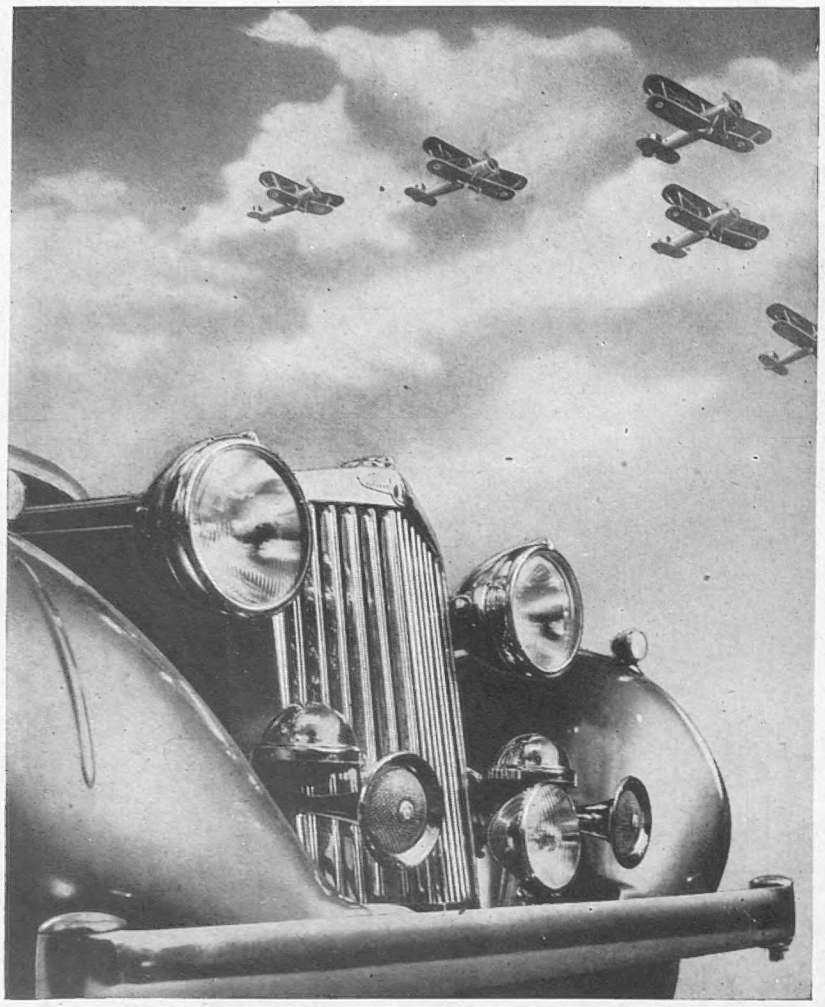

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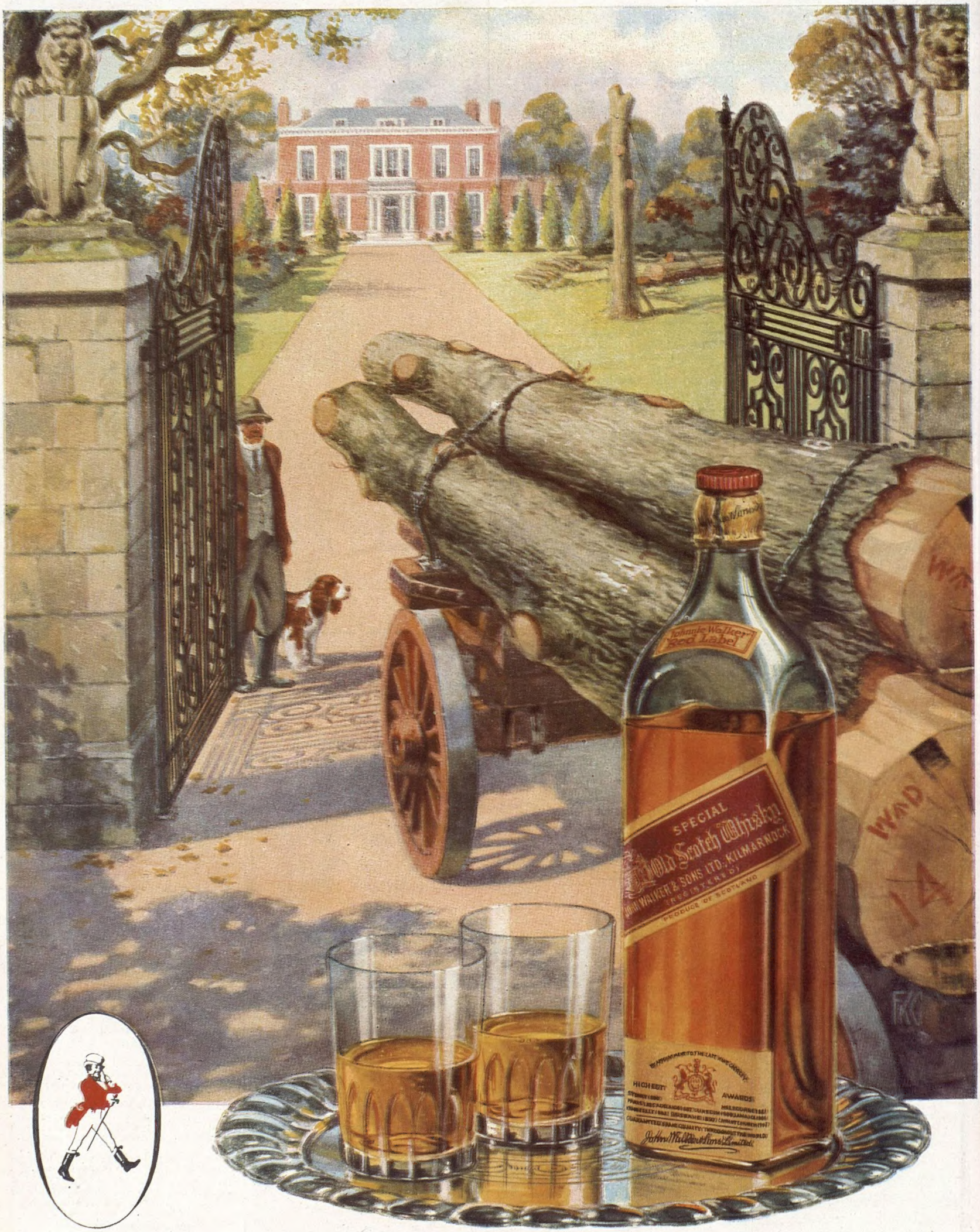

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